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THE  
**NEW**  
**SAD SACK**

by **GEORGE BAKER**

**SIMON AND SCHUSTER**

**NEW YORK**



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## PREFACE

81146 McEwing 133

BACK IN 1937, I went to the West Coast from Chicago to work for Walt Disney. Before actually becoming a working member of his staff I, and the other eager beavers who arrived from all parts of the country with me, had to go through an indoctrination period on the intricacies of animation. This indoctrination period, which lasted over a period of months, was intended to give us a working knowledge of the highly technical and specialized problem of animation. The studio put us through this to channelize whatever talent or ability we had. The climax of this period was a test in which we were to put to practical use all the theory and miscellaneous information we had been exposed to in classes during the previous months. It was called the Bouncing Ball Test.

In some respects, the test could be considered a miniature play. It had a cast of four characters—a basketball, a volleyball, a tennis ball, and a ping pong ball. It also had a plot, that although weak on story, had plenty of action: each ball was to enter the scene from a different angle,

bounce around to its heart's content until, tiring of it all, it dribbled to a stop. The important element in the play, however, was the acting. Since each ball had a different weight, air compression, or physical make-up, each would obviously have a separate and distinct type of bounce, or personality, as it is called in the trade. Boiled down, the idea behind the whole thing was to animate each ball, bouncing it in keeping with its personality, which isn't very easy, incidentally.

Every man worked on his test with an intensity that would have done justice to a Broadway Production. Finally, completing the tests, we had them shot, spliced into a reel, and were then ready for our showing. It was natural that we would be nervous at this, our first screen test, for it was, in a way, our debut as animators, who at Disney's hold the equivalent position of a Clark Gable at the live-action studios. Our audience was actually made up of the instructors, but we did have a drama critic present in the form of a man from the front office whose job it was to appraise our work and either drop or renew the options on our contracts.

Midway through the showing, my test flashed on the screen. With a lump in my throat, I sat fascinated as I watched the moving images that were the result of my creative labors. The volleyball made its appearance first and was joined a few seconds later by the tennis ball, both bouncing around like the bit players I intended them to be.



Then, with a flourish, in came the hero, the ping pong ball, lightly skipping along without a care in the world, happily bouncing away its kinetic energy. But before it could play itself out to restful repose, the basketball lumbered in, thudded a few times and then, without warning, crashed down on the helpless ping pong ball, reducing it to a pulp.

That tragedy was the first manifestation of my basic type of humor that in time was to find its perfect pawn, a ping pong ball that would reinflate itself after every blow and bounce back for more after every defeat, a ball that would even look vaguely like a man—the Sad Sack.

Oddly enough, this attempt of mine to inject a bit of humor in the Bouncing Ball Test did not make a very satisfactory impression on the instructors. They felt, I believe, that I was nothing more than a sadist, a torturer, a cruel, hard man, much too vicious to be entrusted with the whimsy and charm of Mickey Mouse or the Little Pigs. And, consequently, I was sent over to the Effects Department where I could play with the violence of fire and lightning to my hard heart's content.

Four years later I emerged from this dabbling with the elements carrying a picket sign back and forth in front of the studio both for a raise in pay and for the sunshine and exercise involved. Half of this paid off; one month later I had gained a beautiful suntan under the steady diet of California sunshine and a set of well developed leg muscles,

and, in general, I glowed with health. But financially I was on my can.

While debating in my own mind how best to preserve my remaining capital (forty dollars) my greetings arrived from the President and made the decision for me. In June, 1941, the United States Government declared me a soldier, a perfect physical specimen, too, according to the medical records; that was satisfying to know but I did regret having trained for it at my own expense.

At the time I entered the Army for my one year's training under the Selective Service Act, Pearl Harbor was still seven months away, and the European situation, to the uninformed like myself and millions of other Americans, looked as if it might straighten itself out and reach a conclusion without our actual involvement. To the men in training the possibility of war was too remote to be taken seriously and it therefore made our confinement seem frustrating and futile. The Army and its caste system, its bumbling inefficiency and confusion, bad enough in wartime, proved a little hard to take with the country at peace. The soldier's discontent and impatience to get out was obvious enough in the slogan, "Ohio" (Over the Hill in October), which had swept through the camps like wildfire. However, October came and went without any noticeable increase in the rate of migration and the men settled down to the deadly monotony of sweating out their year and getting it over with.

At that time, too, civilian ignorance of the Army was appalling. Everyone seemed to have been educated to the military through the movies, where the ultimate in authority and power is the sergeant and where enlisted men and officers drink together like buddies, squaring off on occasion to determine who is going to get the girl. Simple terms such as K.P. or Inspection drew a blank and needed explanation. In an endeavor to rectify this sad state of affairs and also to occupy my evenings with something constructive for a change, I decided to do some cartoons that would explain pictorially what Army life was like.

To begin with I had to devise an average soldier. In order to refute the ads that were then beginning to make their appearance, in which soldiers always looked bright and cheerful, bedecked in tailored uniforms immaculately pressed and shined, I reached into psychological, if not actual, reality and pulled out my crushed ping pong ball. The state of mind of a soldier was more authentic and real to me than his outer appearance, so therefore my character looked resigned, tired, helpless and beaten. Going the whole hog, he looked clumsy and even a little stupid, but these last two elements were actually unintentional and only slipped in because I was still a bit rusty in my drawing.

When I had completed three drawings I began to look around for a means of getting them published. At my first available three day pass I took them into New York City

(which was only fifty miles from Fort Monmouth where I was stationed at the time) and made the rounds of various newspapers, all of whom shuffled me out as quickly as possible. I also tried, in desperation, Simon and Schuster, alleged publishers, who I thought might be interested in a cartoon book if I could get enough drawings together. But they, too, viewed my work with indifference. I took the drawings back to camp, hid them in my foot locker and tried to ignore my disappointment.

Some months later, the Defense Recreation Committee in New York ran a cartoon contest for servicemen, and I, having no apparent use for my drawings, sent one of them in. It won first prize and with it a typewriter and a great deal of publicity. Now that the drawing was free, it was reproduced in practically every newspaper in town. Fortunately, in this chain of events, Yank was just setting up shop and the publicity I received from the contest must have drawn the attention of the then executive editor, Major Hartzell Spence, to my work, for I soon received a letter from him asking me to submit more samples. After looking at my other two drawings, Spence decided that my character had good feature possibilities and requested that I send a drawing a week to the magazine.

Starting fresh, I titled my character the Sad Sack and sent in a strip for each issue for the next month and a half. And finally, just when I was wearying of devoting all my



spare time to drawing for Yank and had decided to notify them that no more Sad Sacks would be forthcoming, my transfer to Yank came through.

Although in time the Sad Sack grew to be almost a trademark for Yank, in the early days he hardly had a monopoly on the cartoon feature field in the magazine. The big feature at that time in the plans of the magazine was "G.I. Joe," drawn by Dave Breger, who was nationally recognized as a soldier cartoonist through his work on The Saturday Evening Post.

Breger was taken on Yank at its inception and he created G.I. Joe to assume the star role cut out for him by the men who planned the make-up and content of the magazine. Early promotion pieces plugged G.I. Joe as Yank's outstanding feature, with little or no mention of the Sack. G.I. Joe ran in Yank for about eight months until one day Breger, who was in London at the time, accepted a commission of Second Lieutenant in Special Service and it had to be dropped; Yank's policy was that contributing members of its staff had to be in enlisted grade.

There were a number of other features taken on from time to time but for some reason that is hard to determine at the moment, they would disappear after a few appearances. The Sack continued on for about two years as the only regular comic feature of the magazine until Tom Flannery was discovered by our London Bureau. Flannery's

cartoons began to appear on the back page, which was entirely devoted to contributors, and they proved so popular that he was taken on the staff and in a short time was given a regular spot to do a feature. Although Flannery didn't use any consistent character in his cartoons, his work was always so humorous that he had no difficulty in maintaining his reader interest from week to week.

Another discovery that Yank could have made, but didn't, much to its regret, concerned a soldier stationed in a southern camp who sent in a constant stream of cartoons to one of our early feature editors. Although the cartoons weren't too well drawn they did have an "army flavor" about them and undoubtedly they would have gone over with the men. The feature editor, however, didn't think so, and over a long period of time he only used one or two of the many cartoons sent in. The cartoonist, tiring of the monotonous regularity with which he received Yank's rejection slips, lost his patience and his temper and sent the feature editor a scathing letter. He denounced the editor, the magazine, and the cartoons in it and in general gave the impression that as far as he was concerned, Yank and he were through.

The feature editor, feeling confident that his judgment of the cartoonist's work was correct, put the letter upon the bulletin board to reveal to everyone how unjustly he and Yank were being attacked.

Whether the soldier was right or wrong in the opinions



he expressed about Yank or about the feature editor is beside the point. He did prove, however, that he was right in his estimate of himself. For about a year later, Ernie Pyle unearthed him on the 45th Division News and he was so impressed with his cartoons that he devoted an entire column to his praise. The Mediterranean Stars and Stripes grabbed him up and the cartoonist was on his way to a spectacular career. The cartoonist's name, of course, is Bill Mauldin.

While these features, or potential features, were being discarded, there was little assurance that the Sack would avoid the same fate. What confidence I did have in my position at Yank stemmed from the fact that I was at least attempting to pay my own way by "doubling in brass" as a salesman.

At the time when practically the entire Army was still in the States training and expanding, I would go out on long journeys whose itinerary covered dozens of training camps. The intention was to expose myself to every branch and phase of the Army, which, presumably, I would absorb and reflect in my work. Yank, which was always understaffed, and at that time needed circulation badly, loaded me down with hundreds of subscription blanks at the start of these odysseys and hoped to follow my progress by the filled-in forms that were to be sent back to the office. As a salesman, I probably did more harm to Yank than good. The various

types of forms and subscription plans were never quite clear to me and consequently I must have confused anyone seeking information from me on how to get the magazine. But I did distribute great quantities of the forms in Company Headquarters throughout the country and any soldier who found one, deciphered it correctly, filled it out, and sent along the required amount of money I considered a sale of mine.

In time, Yank grew big enough to have a circulation department with salesmen of its own and I was relieved of my extra-curricular duty. I worked with the circulation department after that, but only as an artist for the advertising posters they would suggest from time to time. It was one of these posters that gave me the first tangible evidence that the Sack was beginning to take a more permanent part in the plans of the magazine. This poster had a picture of the Sack on it and in big bold letters it said "Subscribe to Yank and see the Sad Sack EVERY WEEK."

That poster was as good as a contract to me, so I settled down to my job without figuratively looking over my shoulder every few minutes to see if the pfc from the orderly room was approaching with my transfer in his hand.

As the Army expanded and overflowed into odd parts of the world, Yank kept pace with it and set up overseas editions to print and distribute the magazine. In all, there were twenty-one editions in operation at one time, blanketing the

Army with Yanks. All the editions had the same content other than the few page changes that each made for its own particular local needs. Yank correspondents would file stories from all parts of the world to the main editorial office in New York. There the copy was edited and the magazine made up and then flown in mat form to all the editions, where plates were made, put on the presses, and run off.

Since the Sad Sack appeared in all the editions, it was necessary to keep the ideas general enough in nature so that they would have the same response whether it was read by a man in the Aleutians, China, Europe, or, for that matter, in Washington. The ideal type of idea for the Sack's purpose was one in which any soldier seeing it could recall or visualize the same thing happening in his own particular unit. There were, of course, many ideas I used that were applicable only to a certain theatre, but these I tried to broaden enough to be understood anywhere. Many ideas, though, based on local situations had to be discarded since I couldn't delineate them clearly enough for a general audience.

In my three and a half years with Yank, I was attached at various times to five overseas bureaus, in Panama, Italy, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan. To get material for the Sack in these places I would move around as much as possible, taking notes on any experience I thought might work into a strip. Sometimes it was impossible to work out

an idea on the things I saw since I would get so accustomed to the peculiar conditions existing around me that they began to appear normal and natural. Some of my best ideas came after I was removed from the source of the material by many months. In one case I did a whole series of drawings on Panama after I had been away from there for more than a year.

The greatest source of material for the Sack, however, was the Army itself. Since the Army has no relationship with time, place, or thing and even remains basically the same under the opposing influences of war and peace, any idea based on the machinations of the Army, the red tape, officers or the thousands of consistent inconsistencies of the system would be accepted and understood by G.I.'s anywhere. The underlying story of the Sad Sack was his struggle with the Army in which I tried to symbolize the sum total of the difficulties and frustrations of all enlisted men. But, somehow, I feel I didn't succeed.

In my last day with Yank, as I was preparing to leave for the Separation Point, I received a long distance call from the Military Procurement Officer of the Fourth Service Command. He was starting, he informed me, an advertising campaign and wanted my permission to use the Sad Sack on a billboard with these warning words: "Don't be a Sad Sack, re-enlist in the Regular Army."

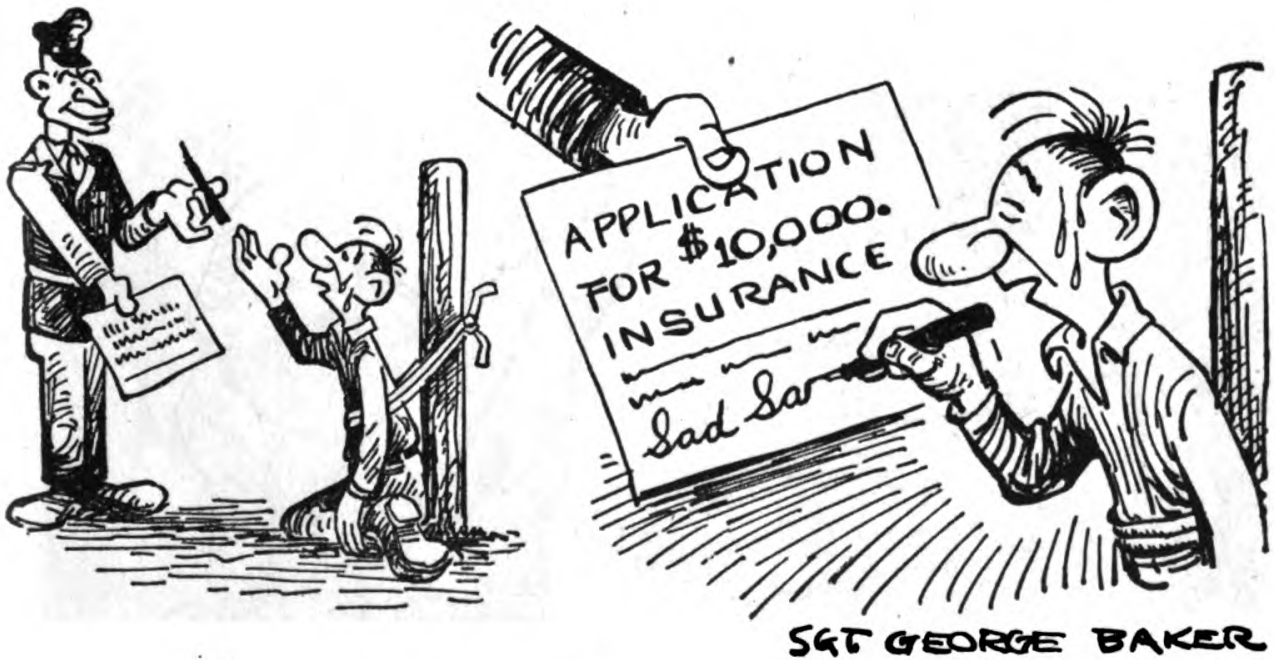
*George Baker*

# THE NEW SAD SACK

# CONVINCED

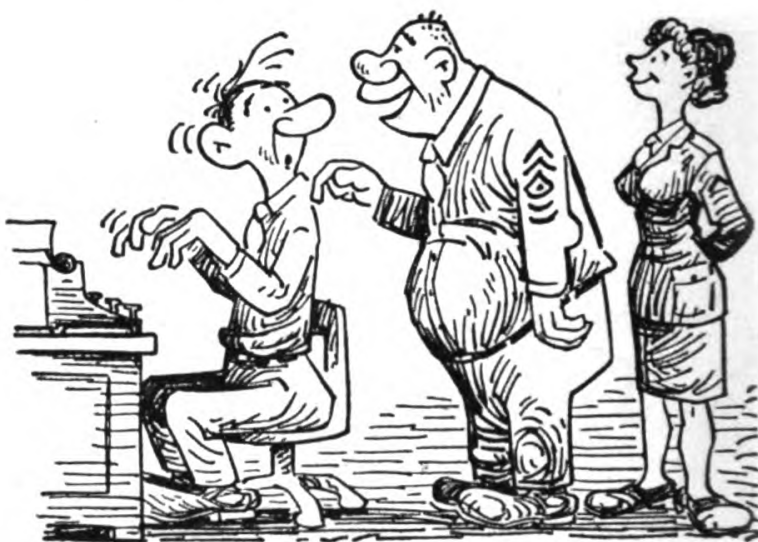






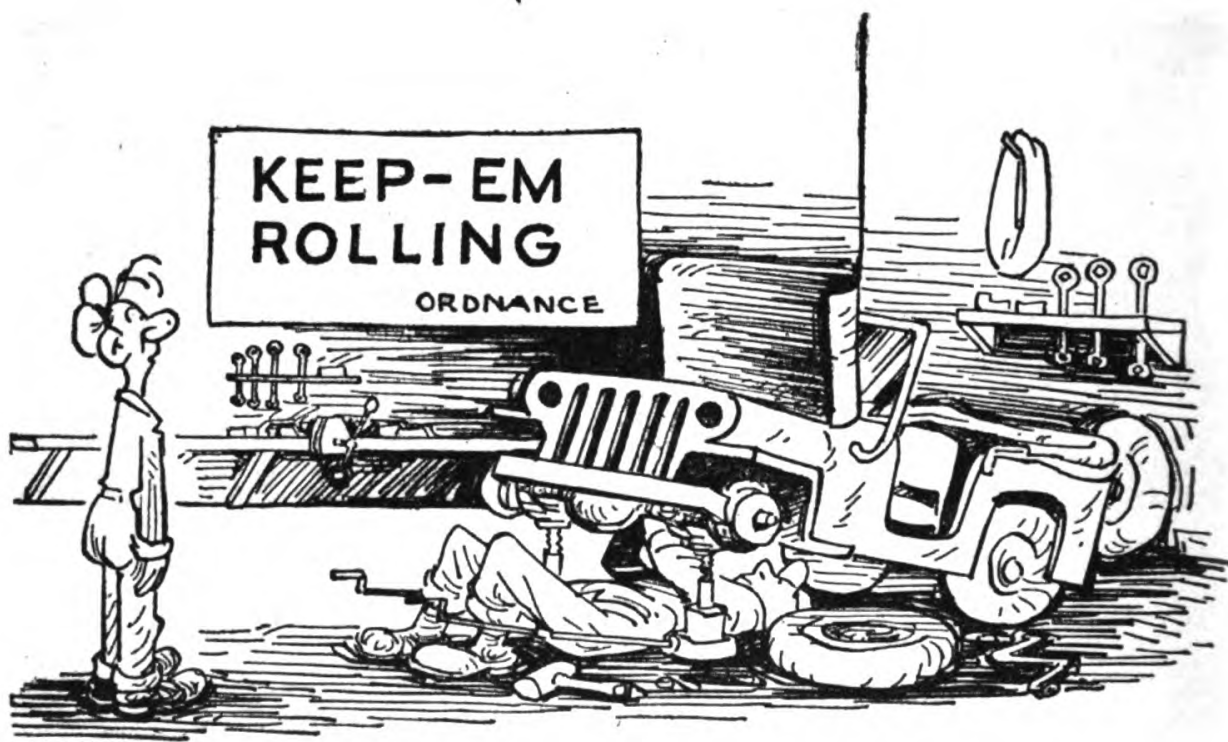
SGT GEORGE BAKER

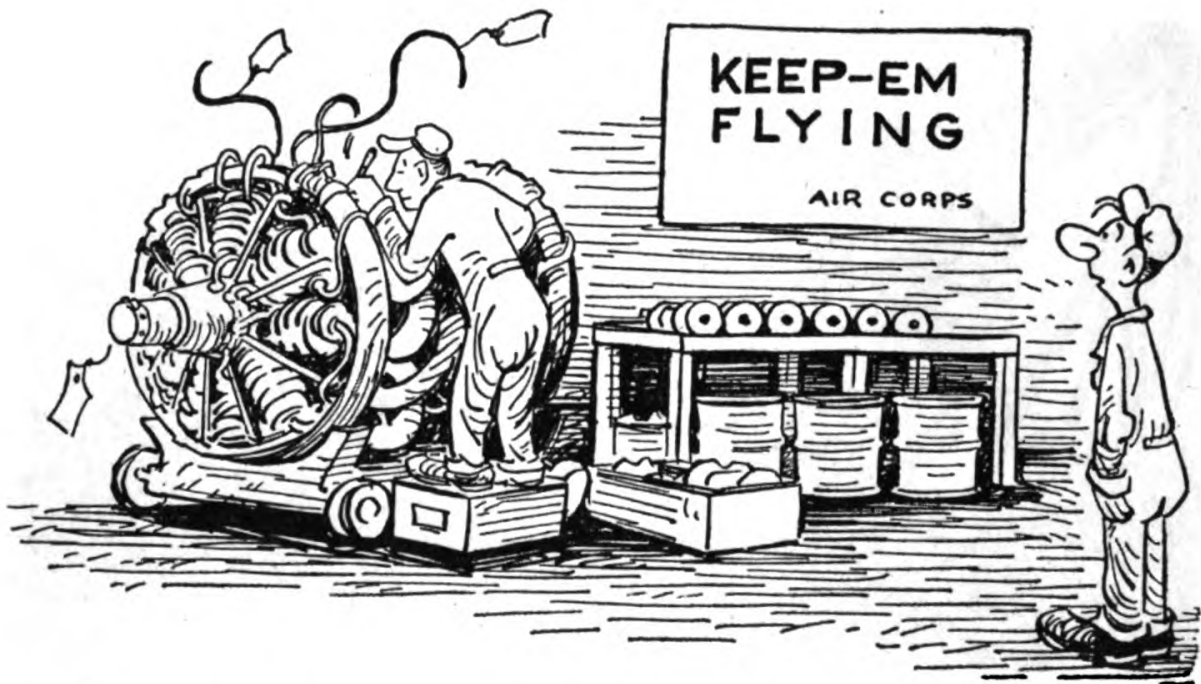
# RELEASED FOR ACTIVE DUTY





# PROFESSIONAL PRIDE





Sgt. George Baker



# TRIGGER HAPPY

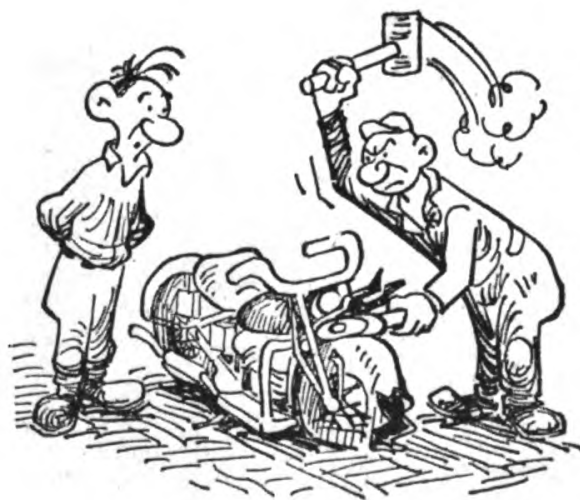
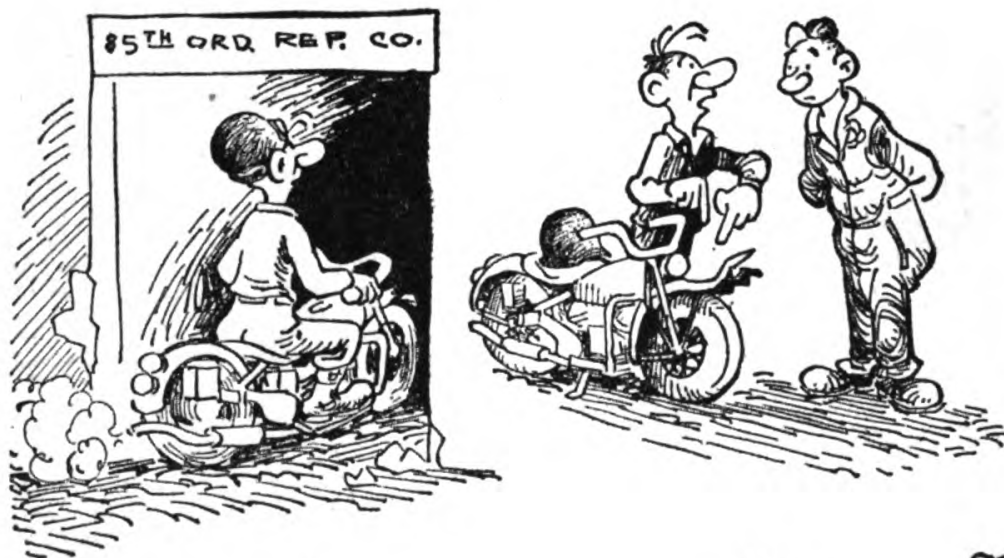




SGT. GEORGE BAKER



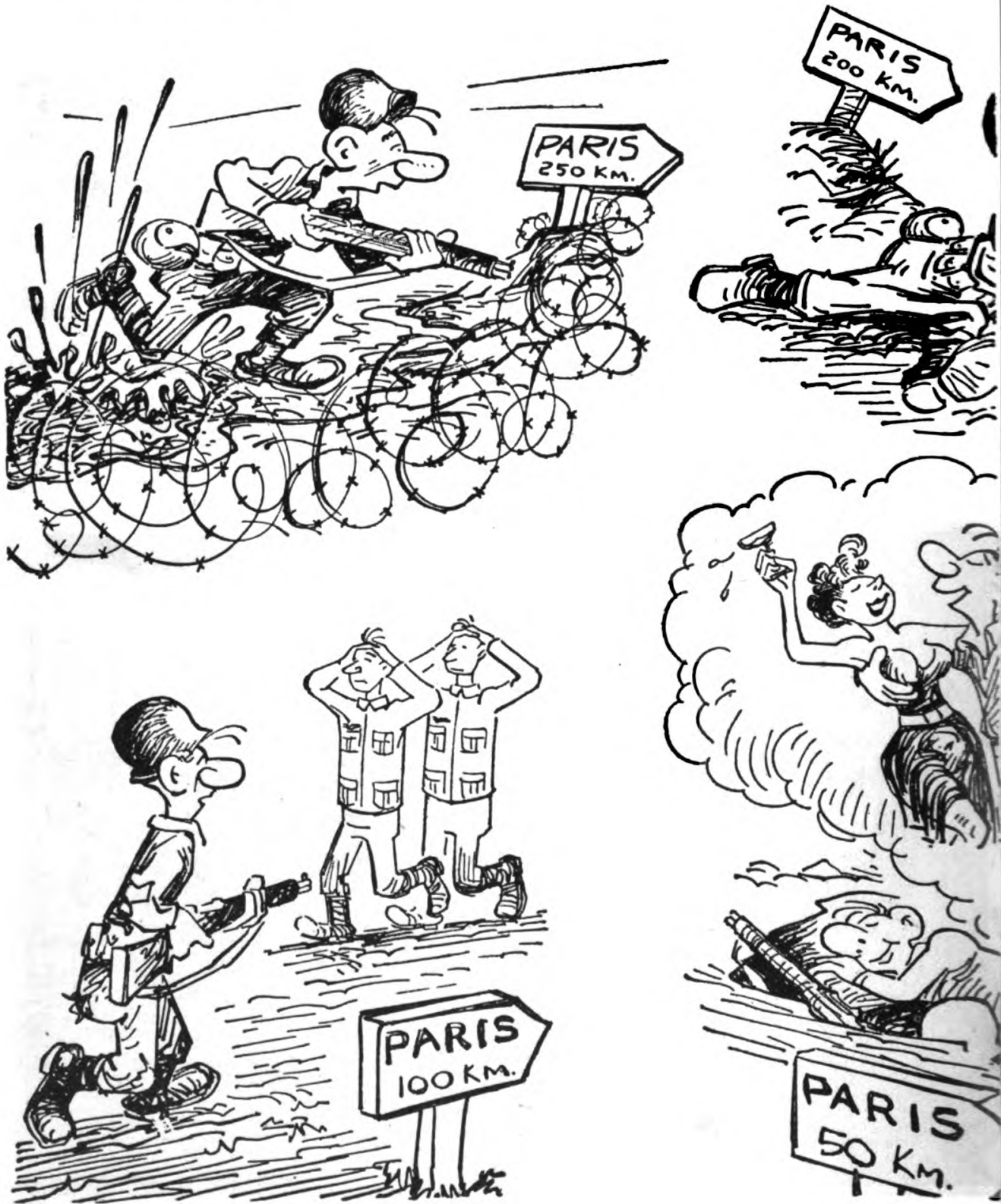
# MINOR REPAIR





SGT. GEORGE BAKER

# OBJECTIVE





SGT. GEORGE BAKER

# DOUBLE TROUBLE #1



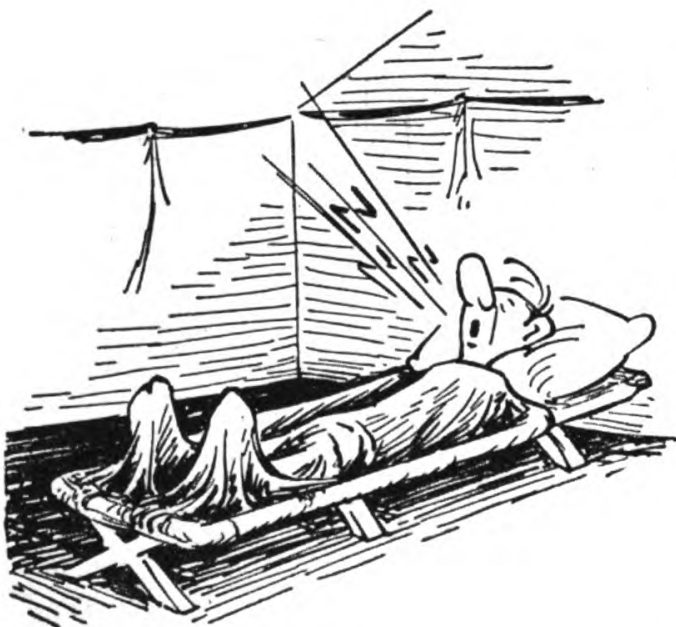




Sgt GEORGE BAKER



# CENSORED FEMALE





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# TOLD OFF





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# OFFICE HOURS









# BOOBY TRAP



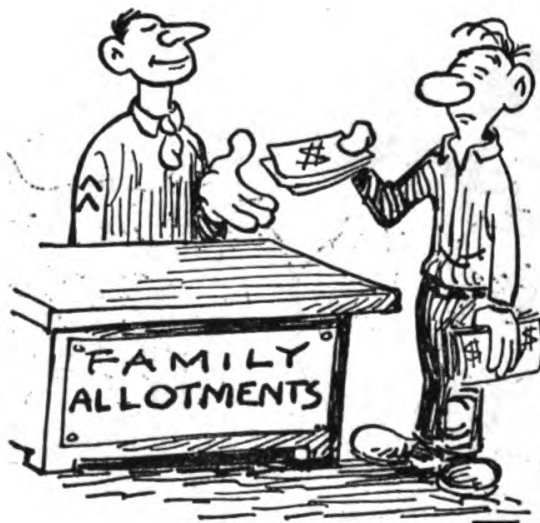


# FRENCH WELCOME





# CHICKEN FEED





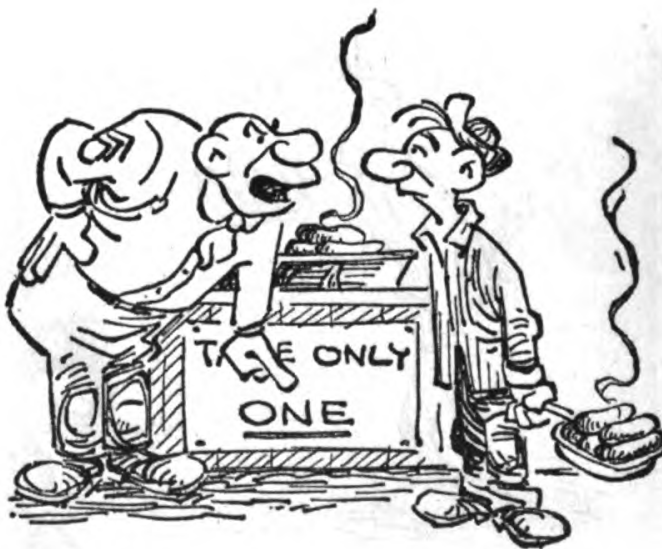
WAGGON



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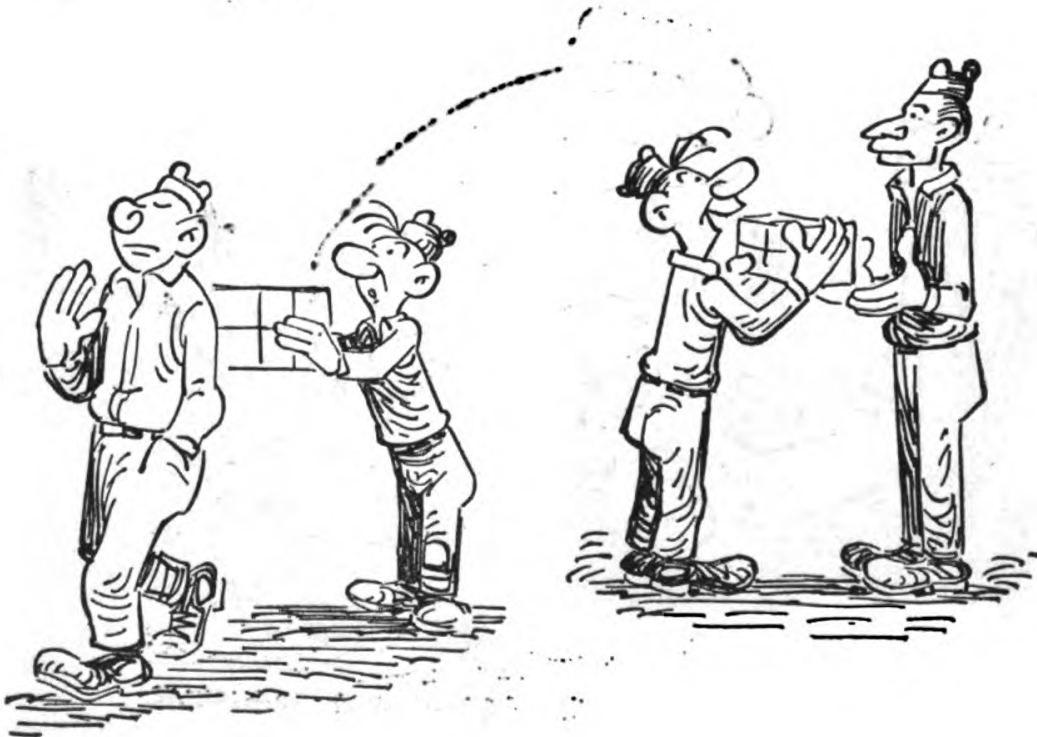
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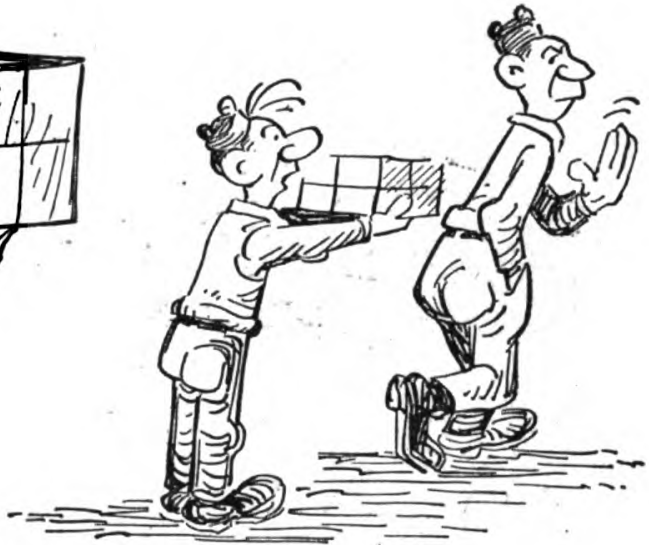


SAT GEORGE BAKER

# GIFT



DAVE CLARK



Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# MECHANIZED WAR







# SUPPLY PROBLEM





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# GUESTS

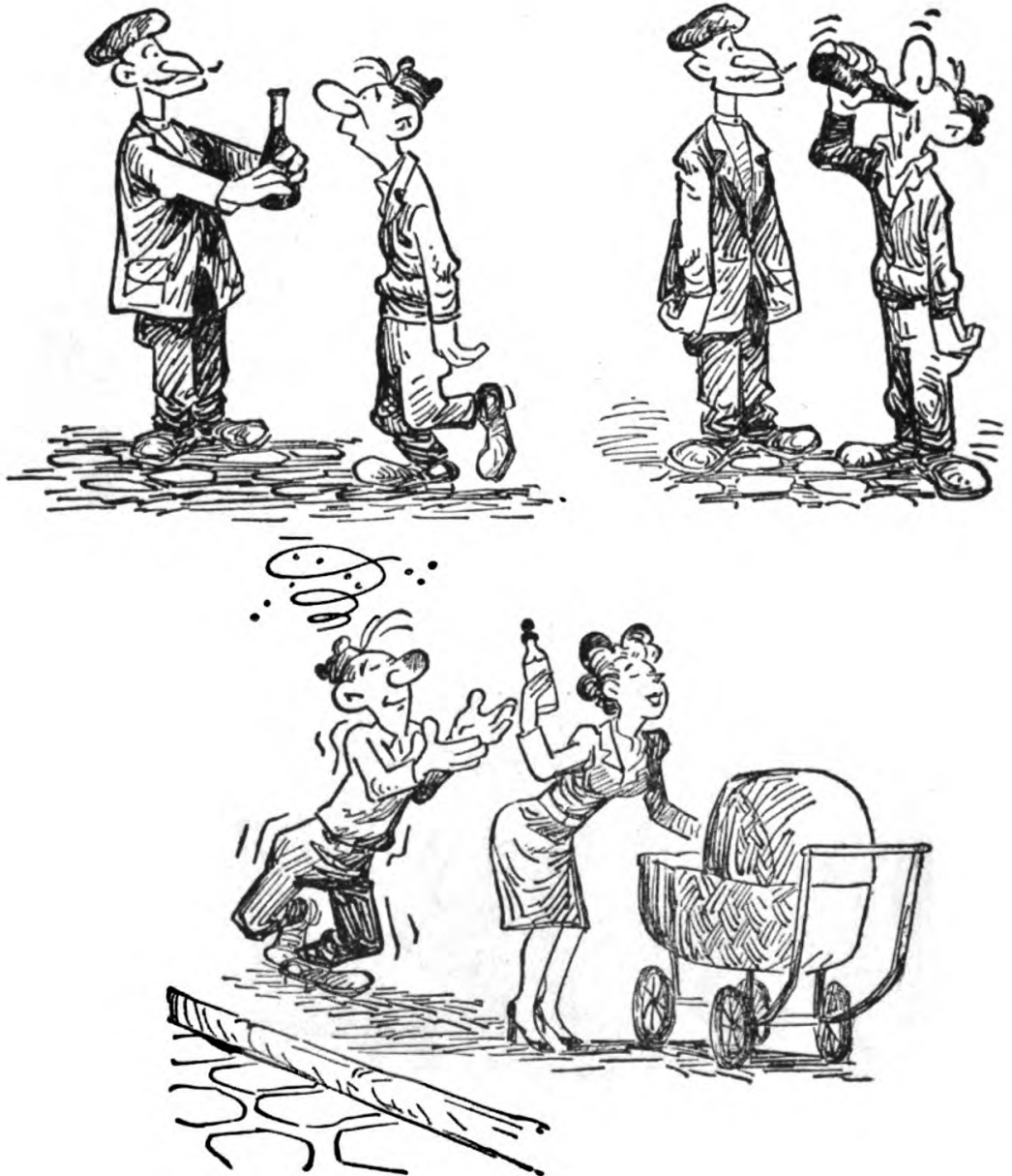




SGT. GEORGE BAKER



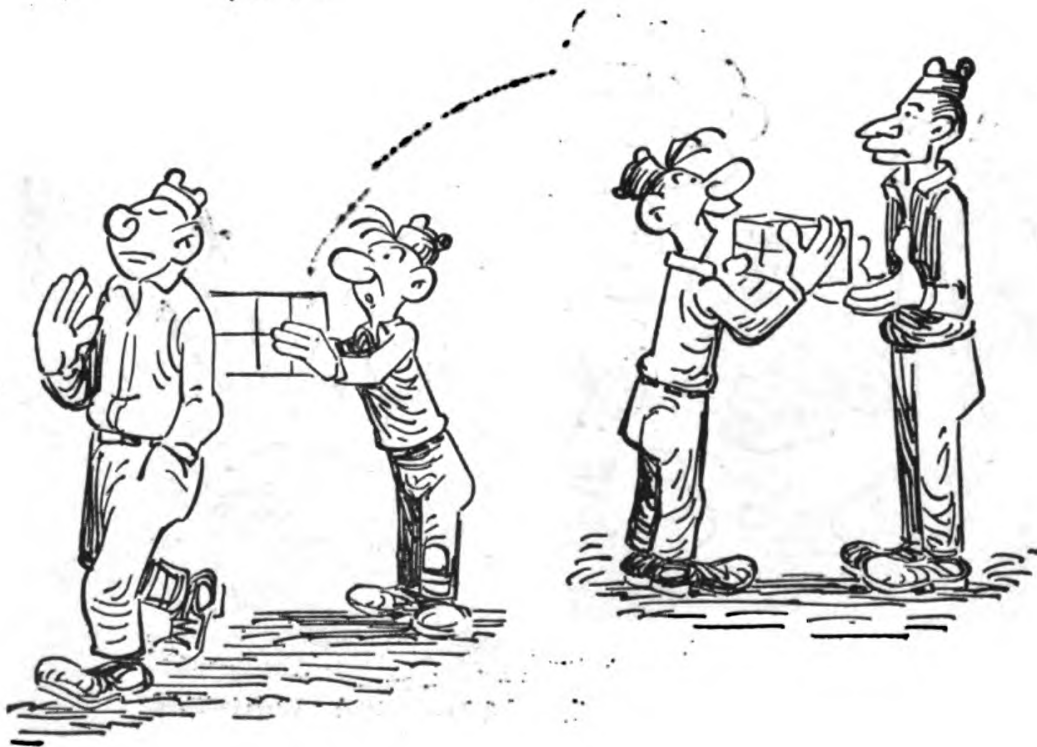
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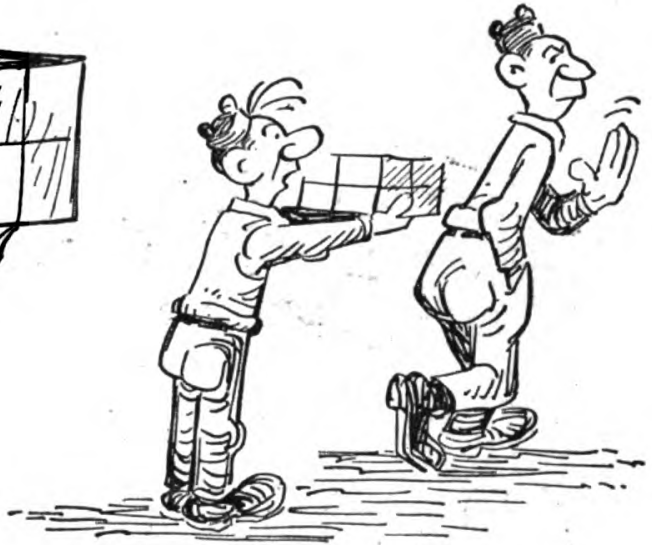


Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# GIFT



WAVE CLEAN LUNA



Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# MECHANIZED WAR







# SUPPLY PROBLEM





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# GUESTS





SGT. GEORGE BAKER



# BOTTLES





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# RAID





SGT. GEORGE BAKER

# THE SAD SACK







## DOUBLE TROUBLE #2





**Sgt. GEORGE BAKER**

# UP AND OUT







# PINCH HITTER





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

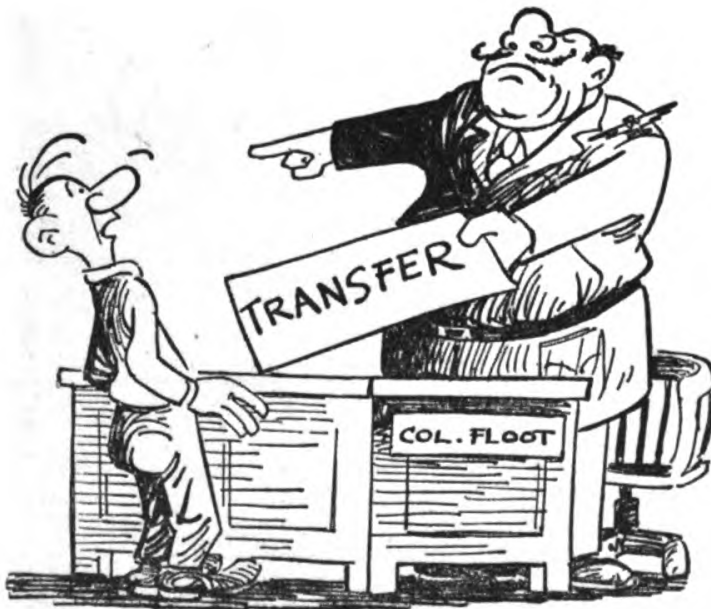
# ENEMY TERRITORY



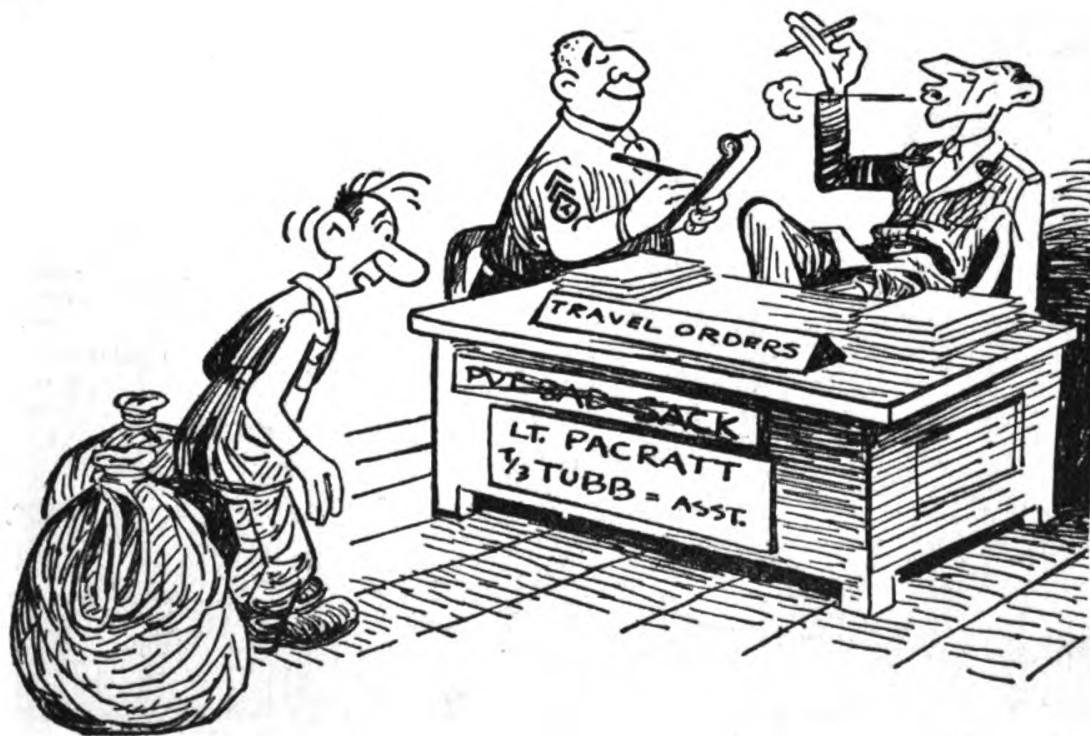
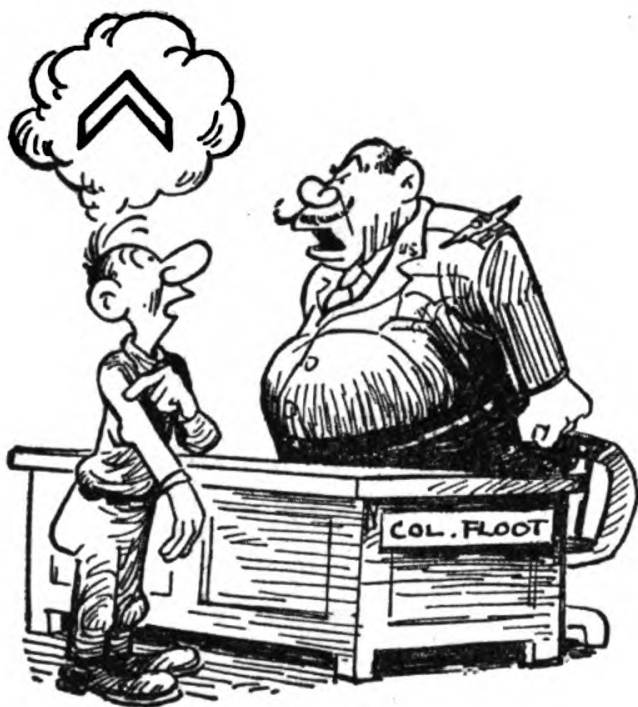


Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# ARMY ECONOMY



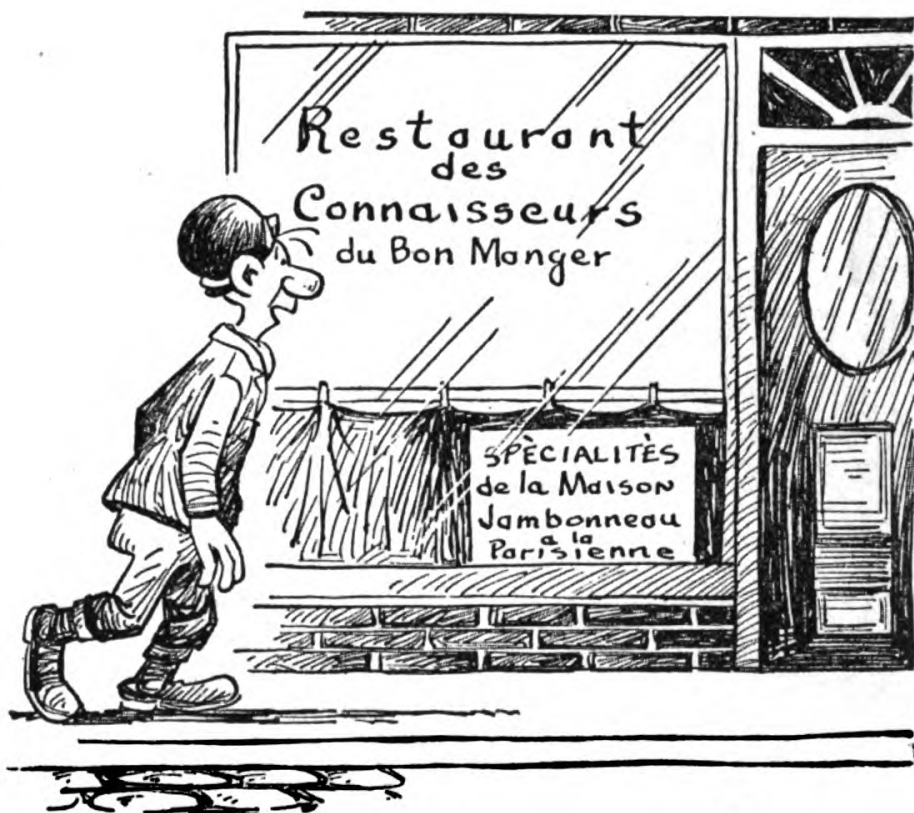




SGT. GEORGE BAKER

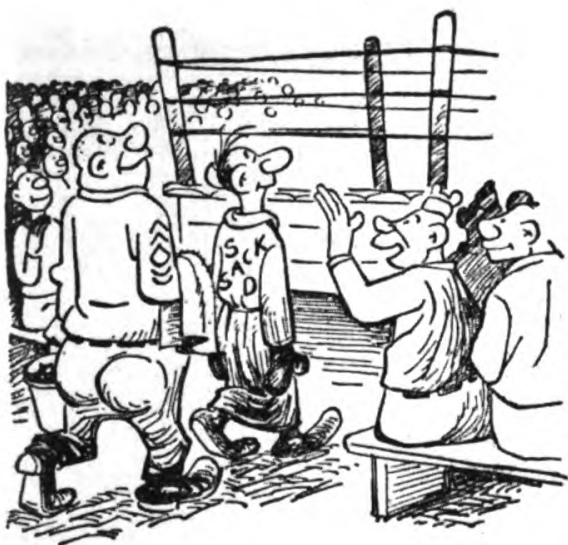
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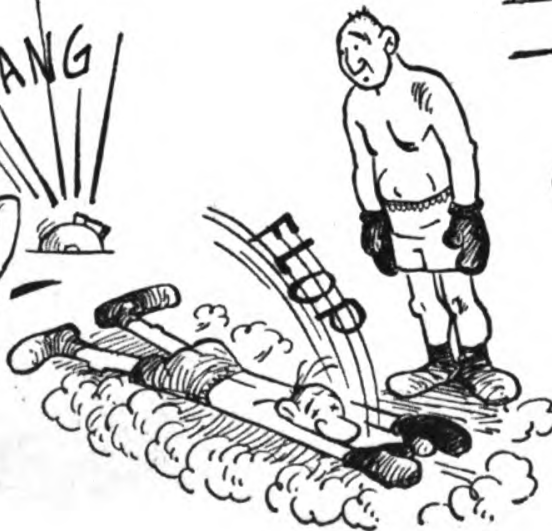
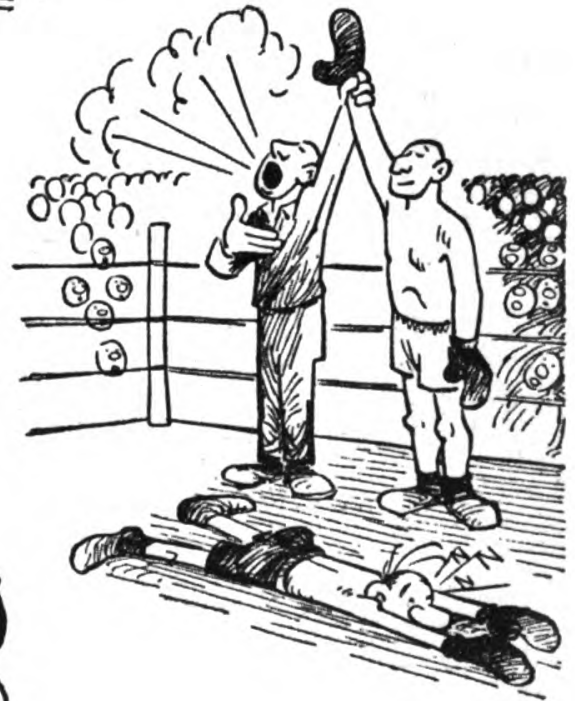


SGT. GEORGE BAKER

# MAN HANDLED



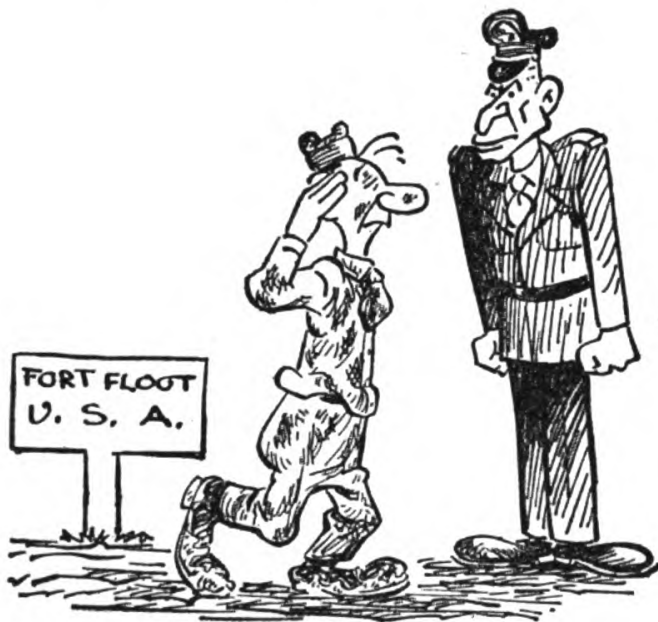




Sgt. GEORGE BAKER



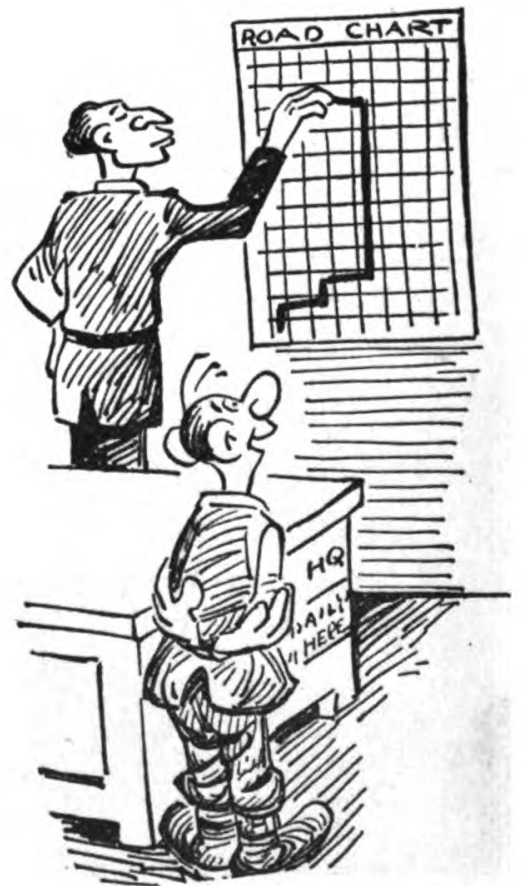
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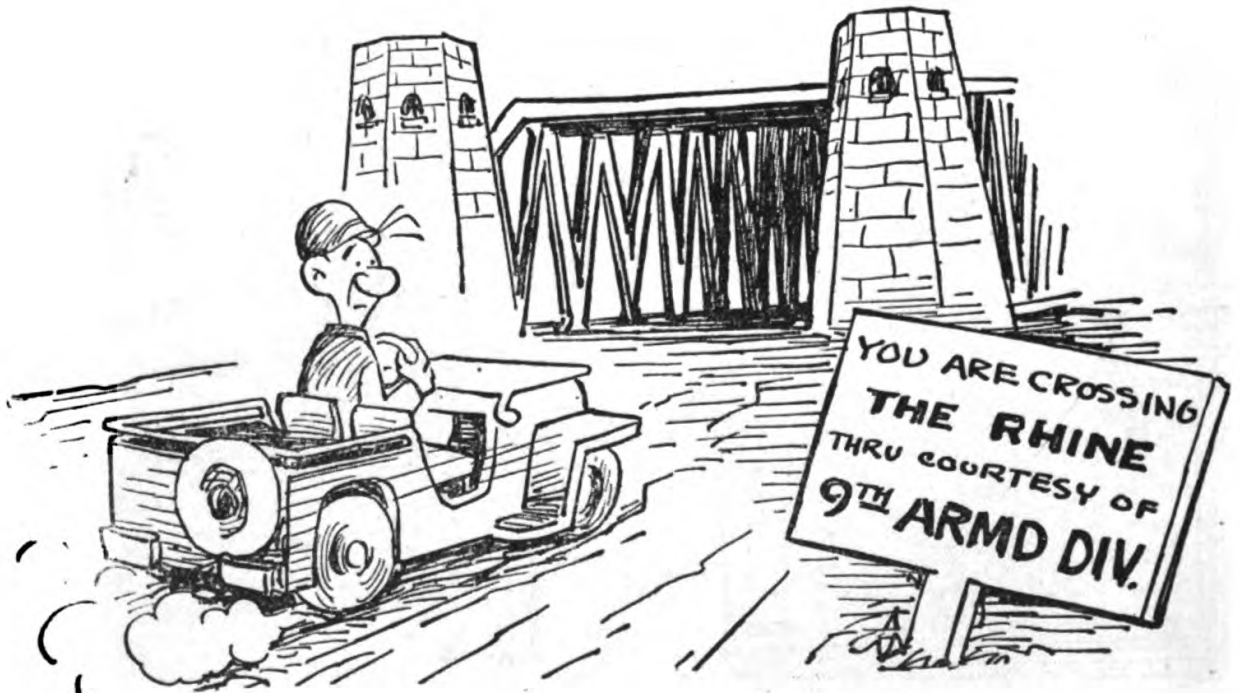
**SGT. GEORGE BAKER.**

# THE PAY OFF

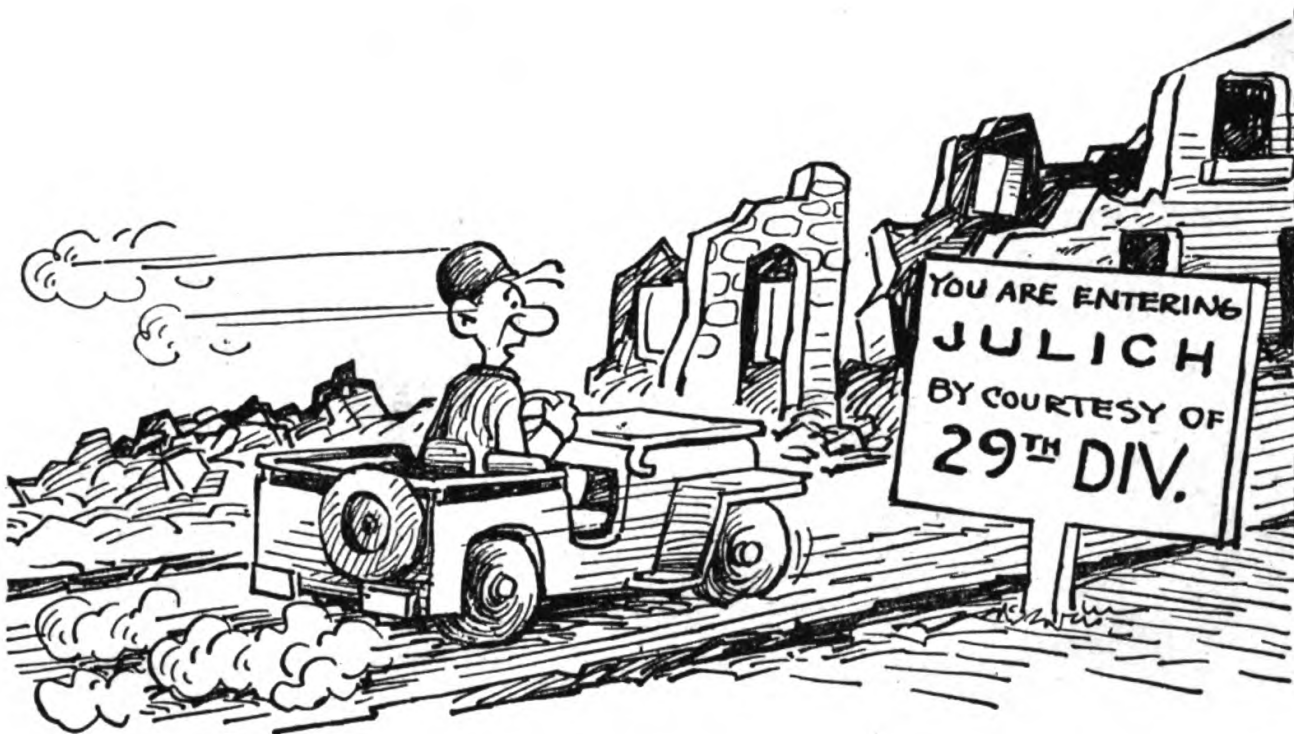




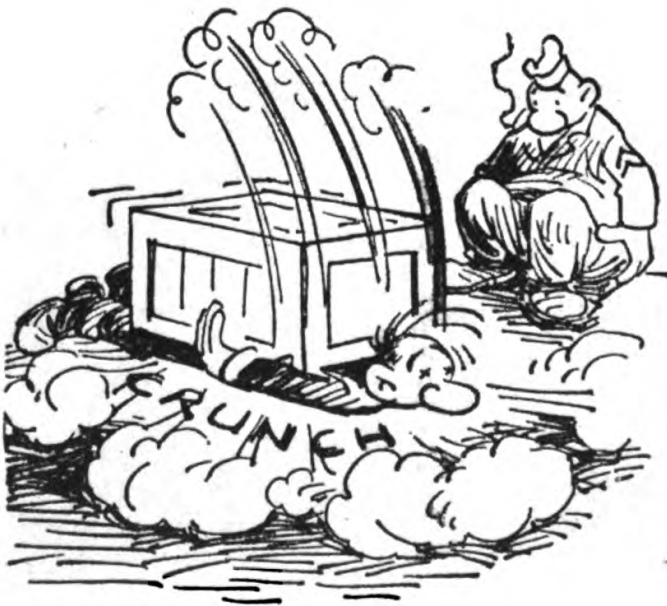
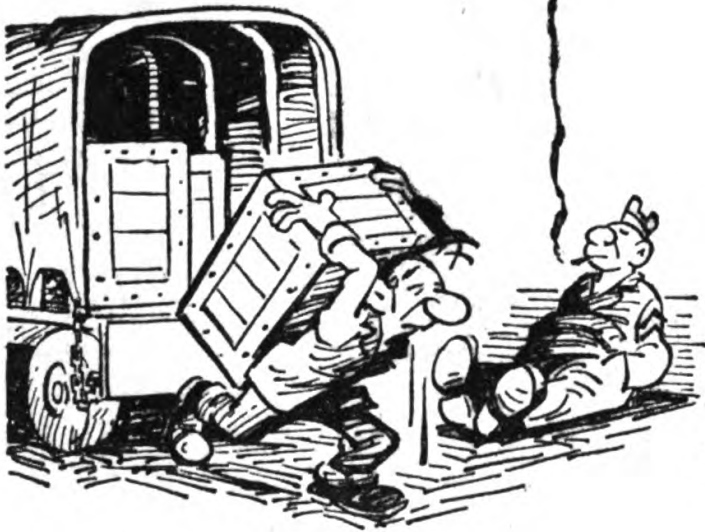
# SCREEN CREDIT







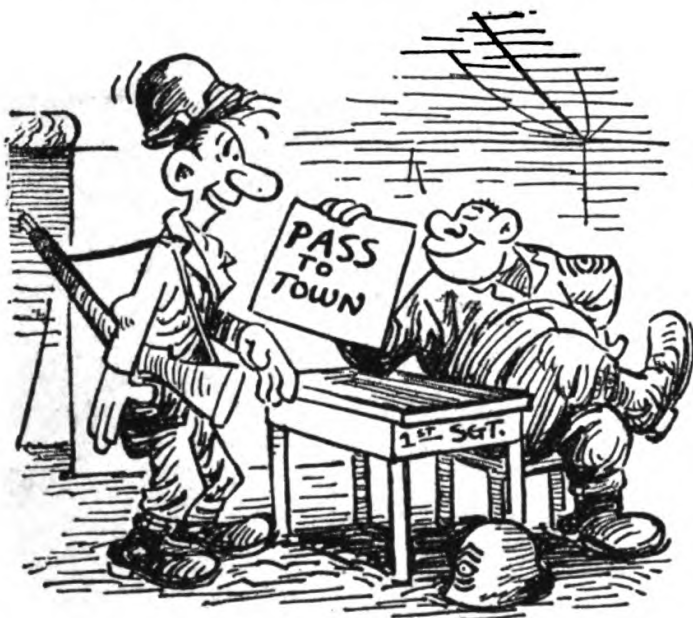
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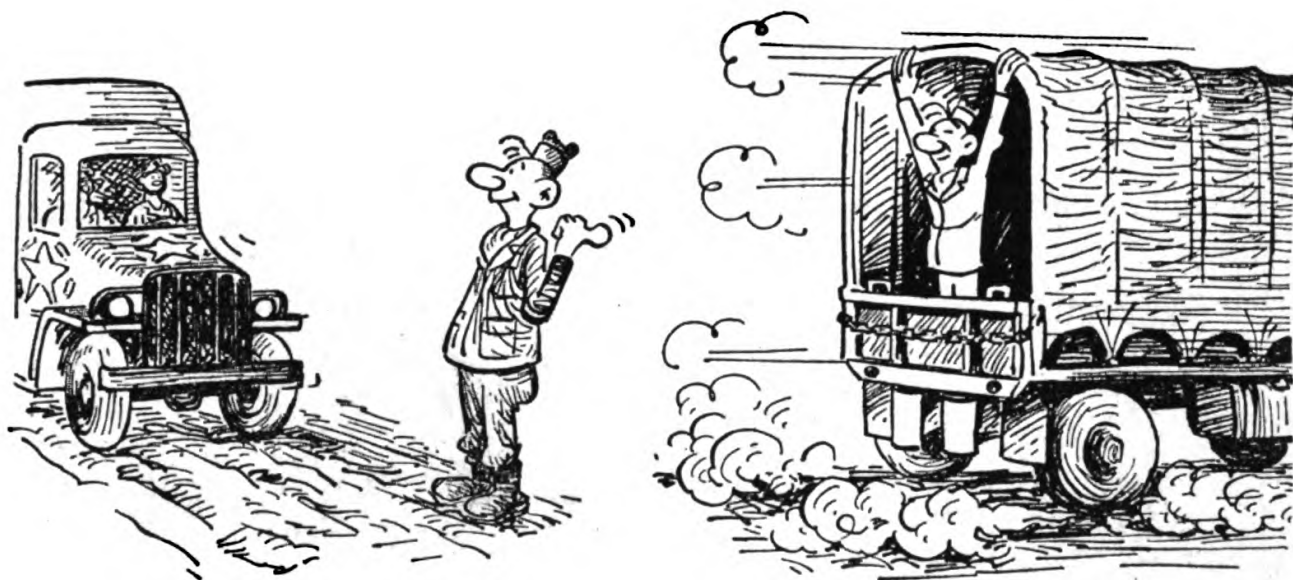




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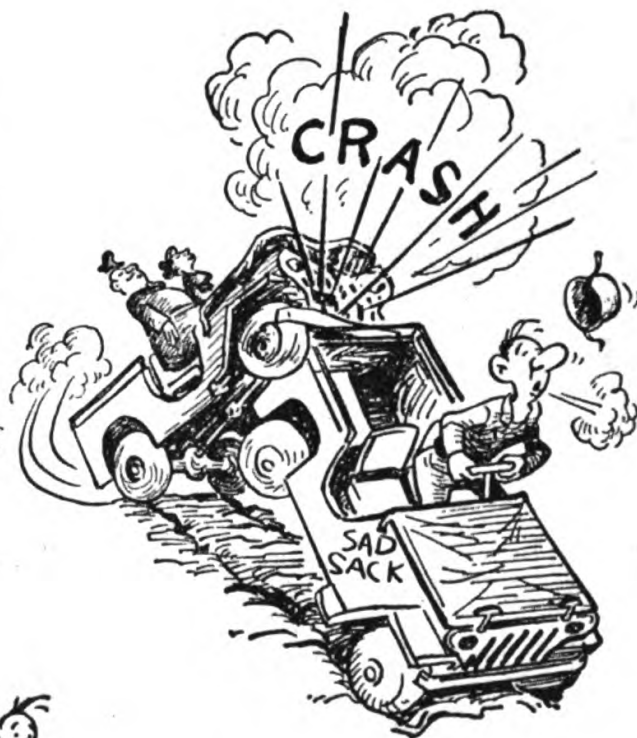
# WIDE OPEN TOWN

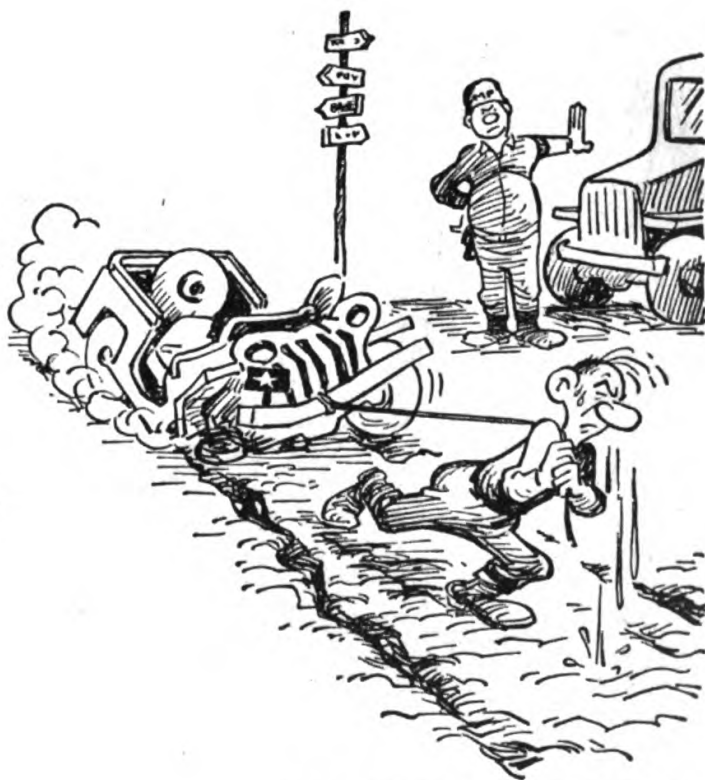






# RANK INJUSTICE





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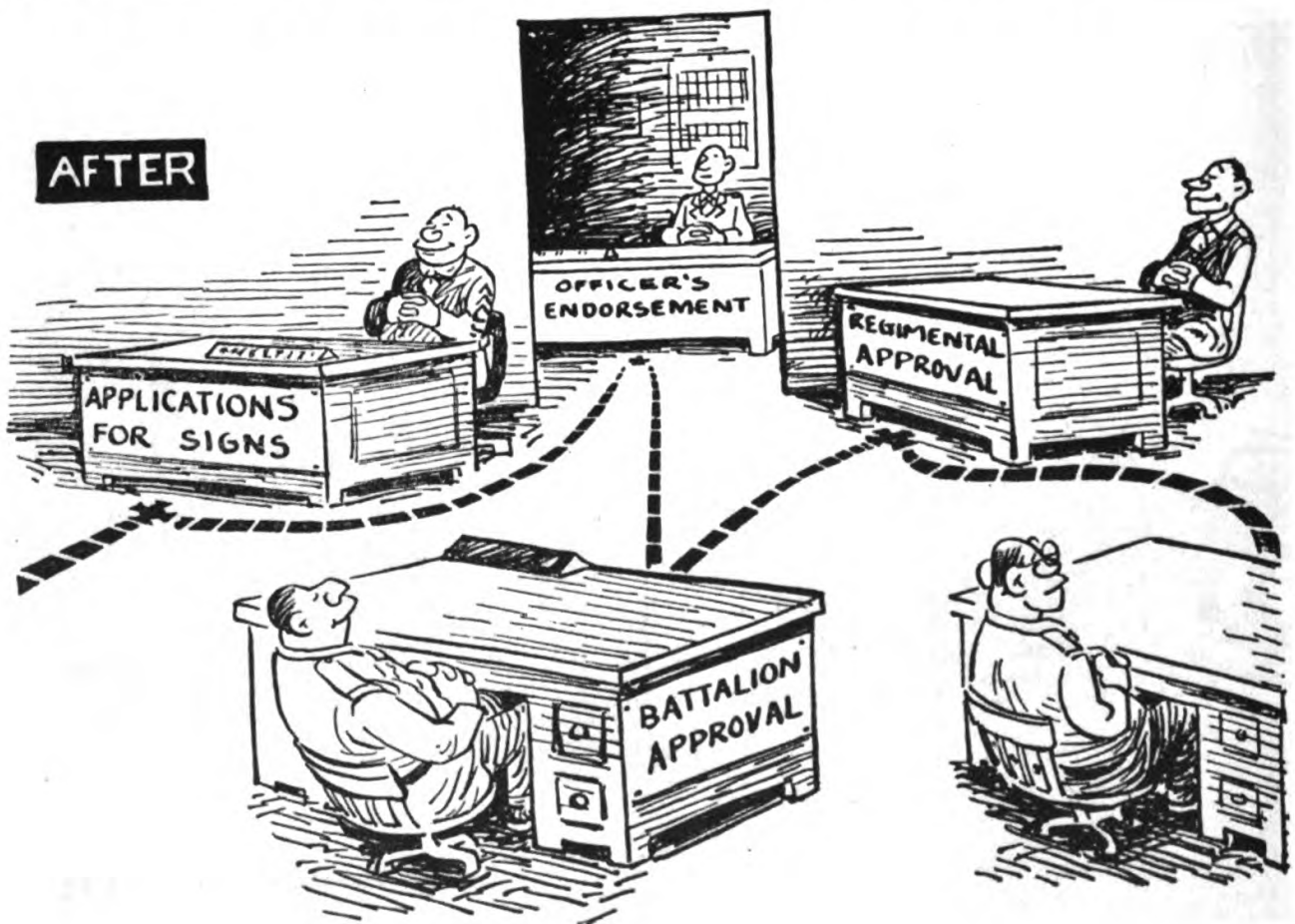
# BIRDS OF A FEATHER



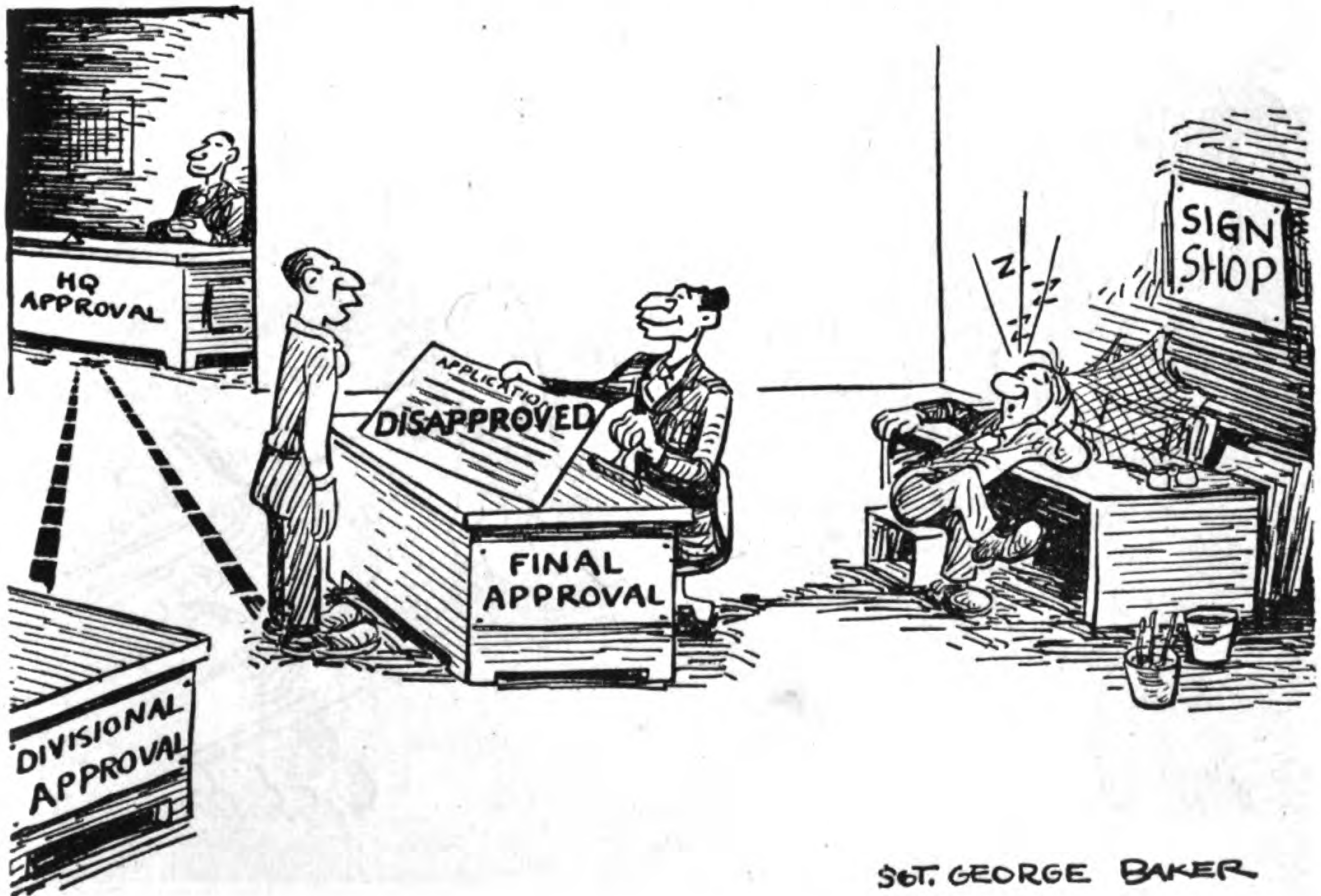


**SGT. GEORGE BAKER**

# ORGANIZATION







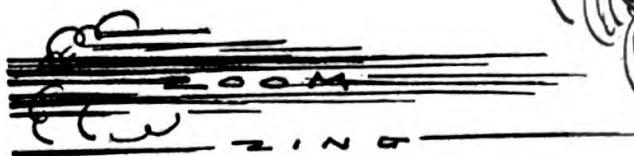
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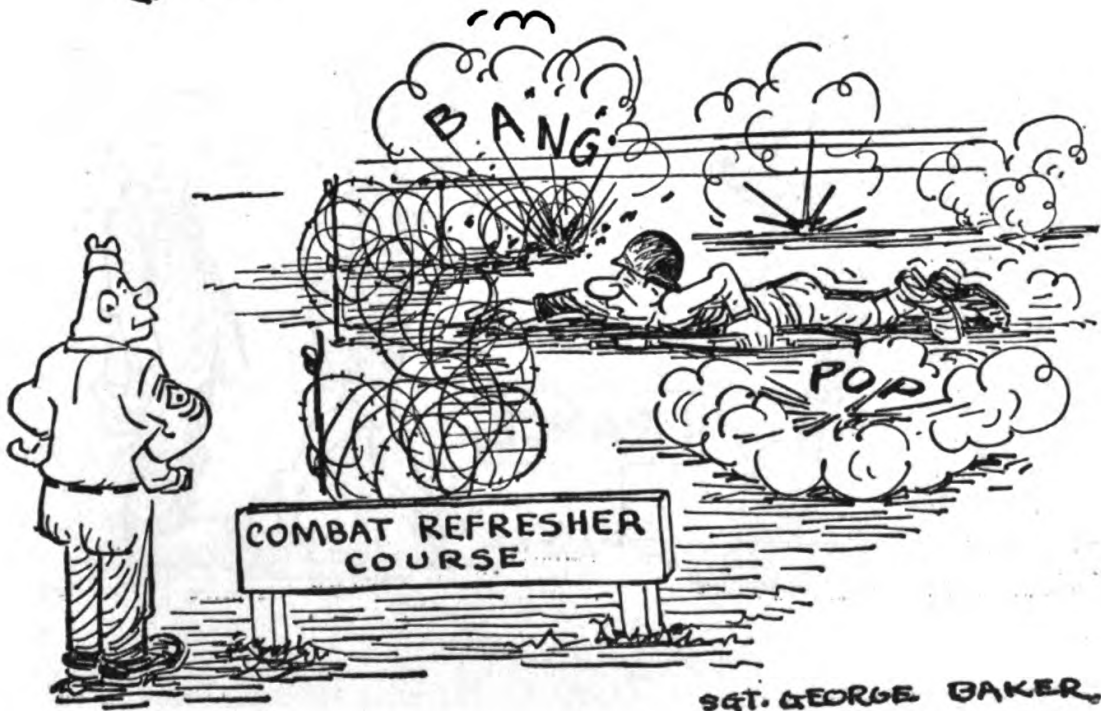
# CHANGE OF CLIMATE





# REST CURE

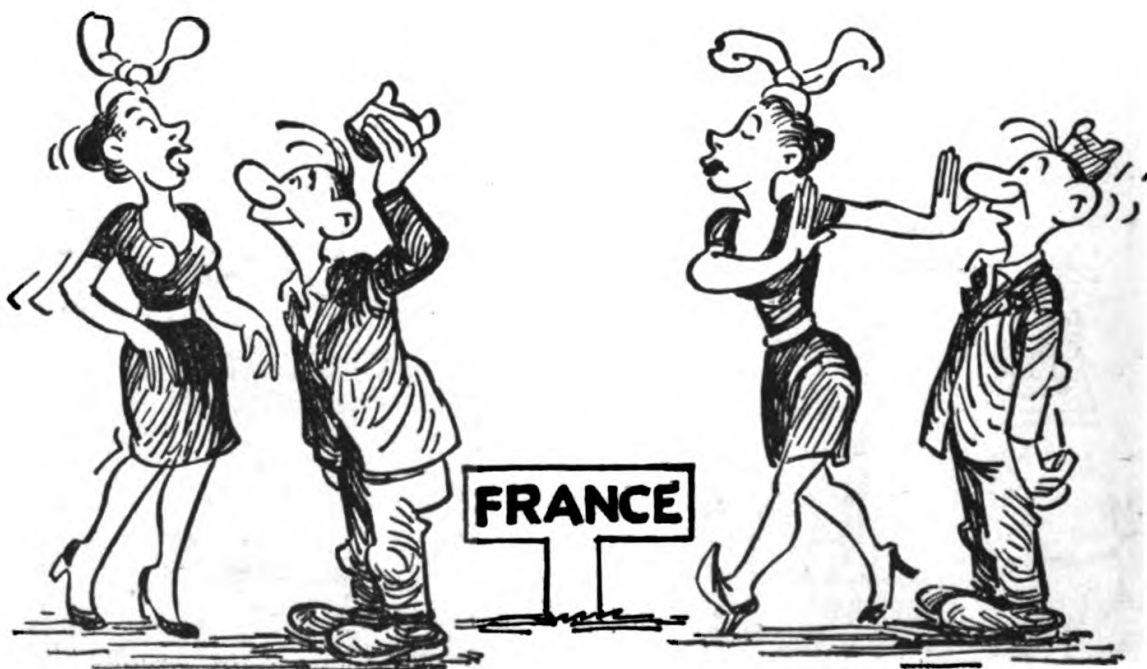
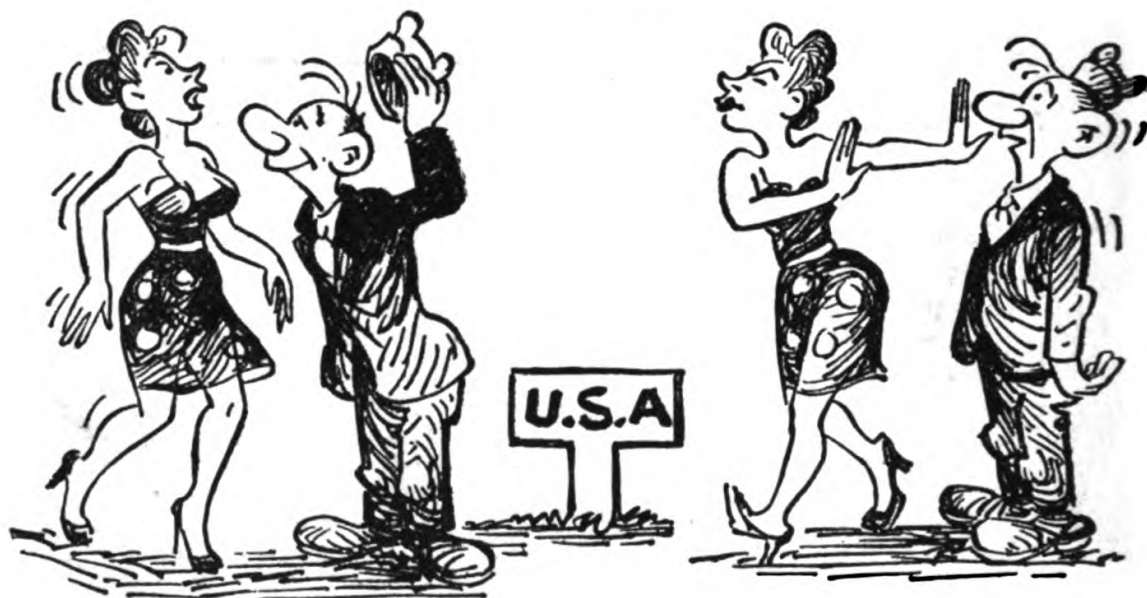




Sgt. GEORGE BAKER



# THE WORM TURNS, RELUCTANTLY

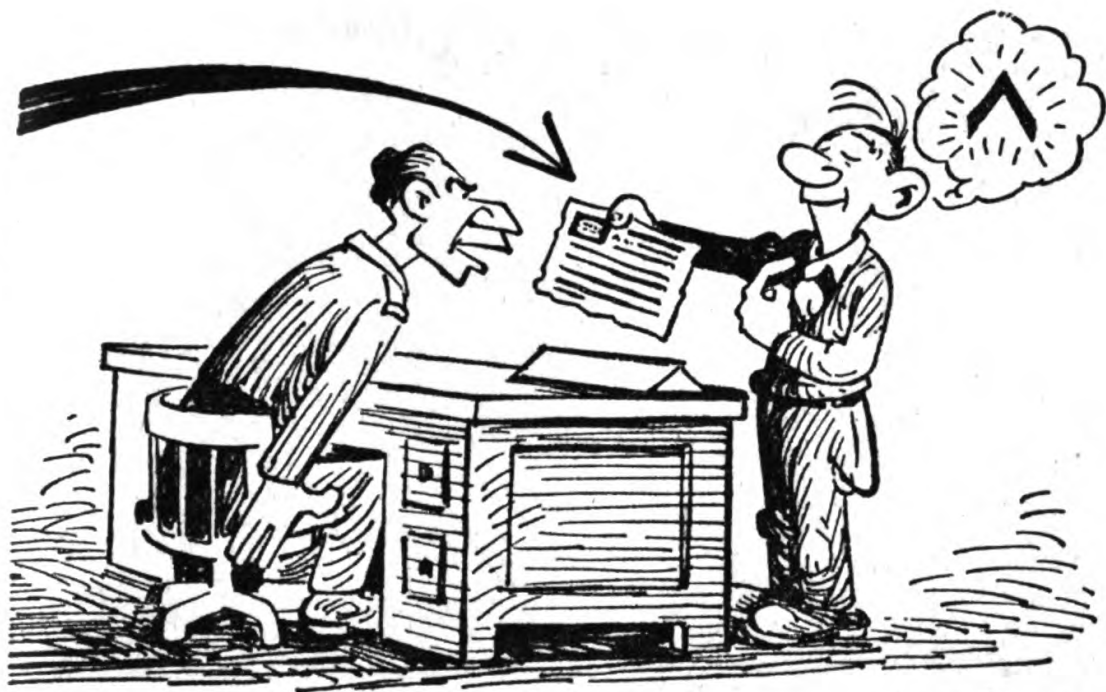




SGT. GEORGE BAKER

# DIFFERENCE OF OPINION





### Appointment of Pfc's

**A** change in AR 615-5 authorizes commanding officers to promote privates to the grade of pfc without waiting for a T/O vacancy. The

change applies to enlisted men or women who have completed one year of satisfactory service, or who have served outside the U.S. Those inducted from a U.S. territory or possession must have served.

The amendment adds that the promotion will be reserved for those qualified ones.

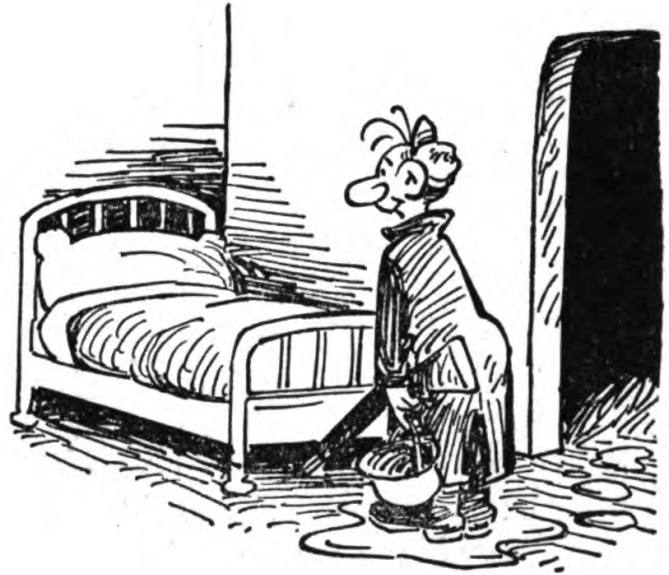
[Change 5, AR 615-5, 1944.]

SGT. GEORGE BAKER

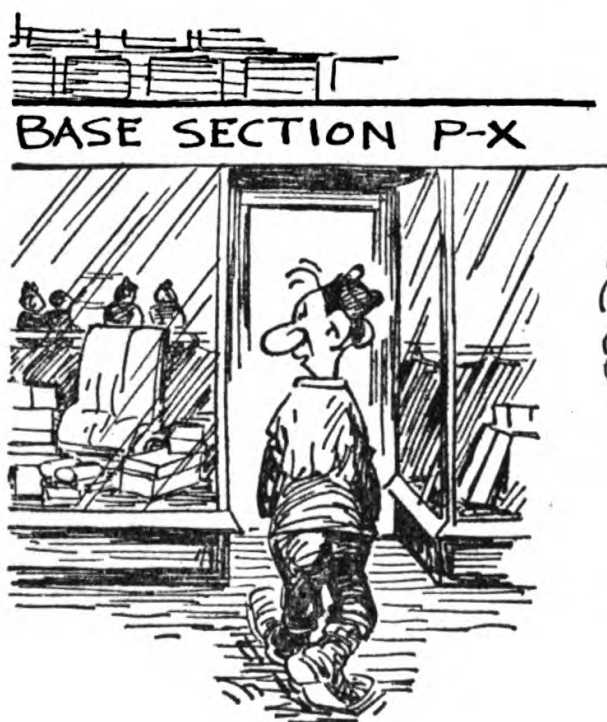
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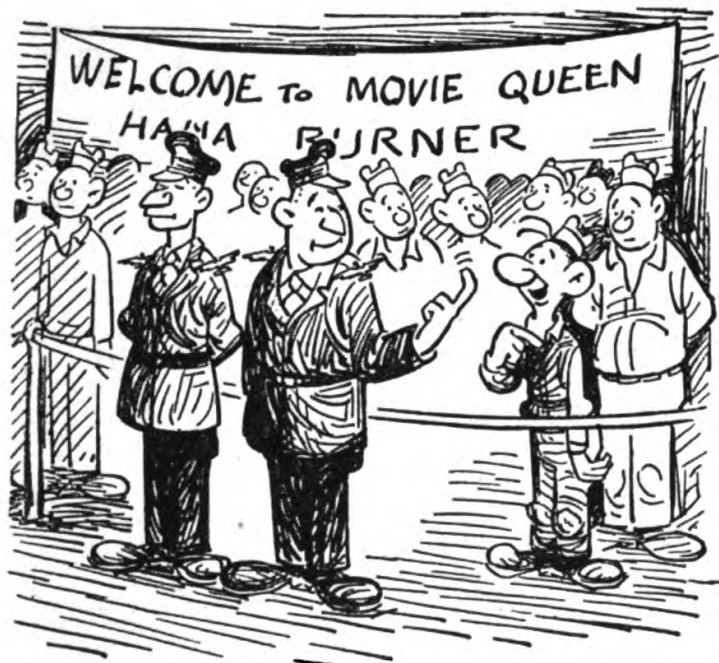
# SERVICE WITH A SMILE



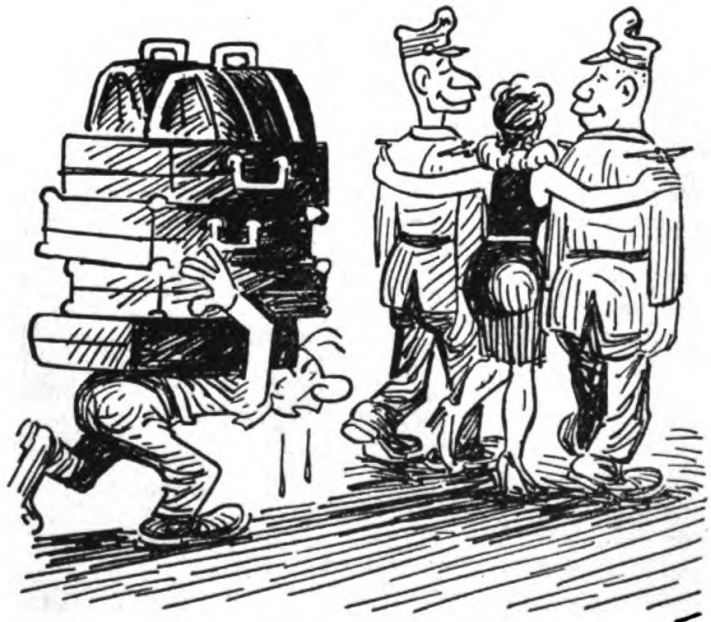


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# RECEPTION COMMITTEE







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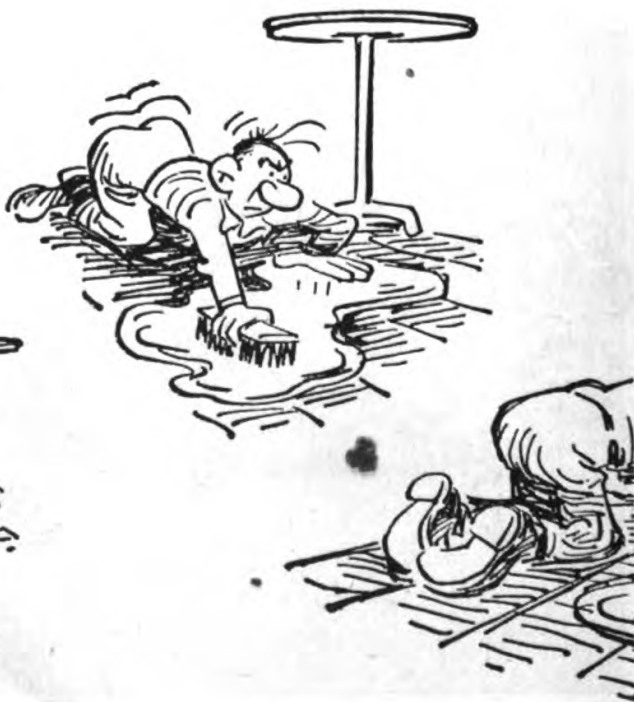
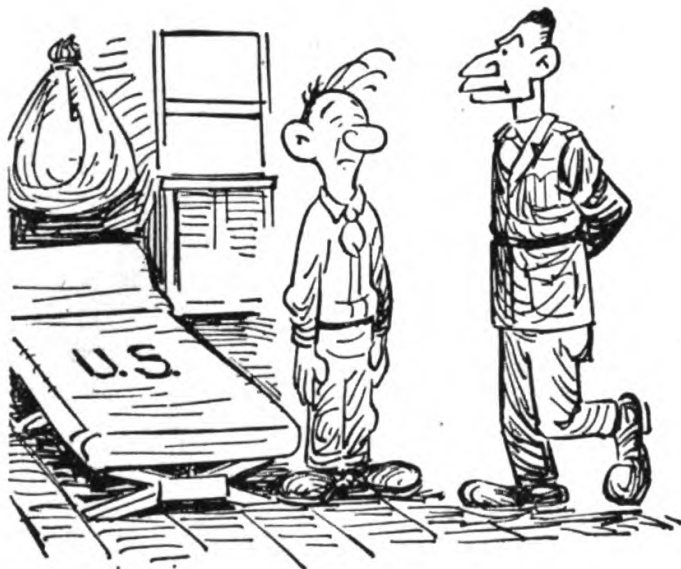


# DREAM





# BOTTLED BOOTY

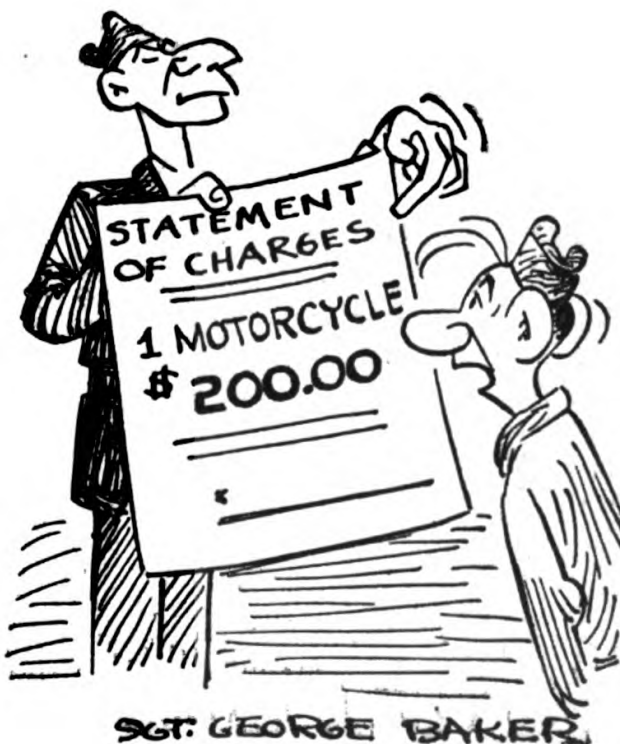




# VICIOUS CYCLE







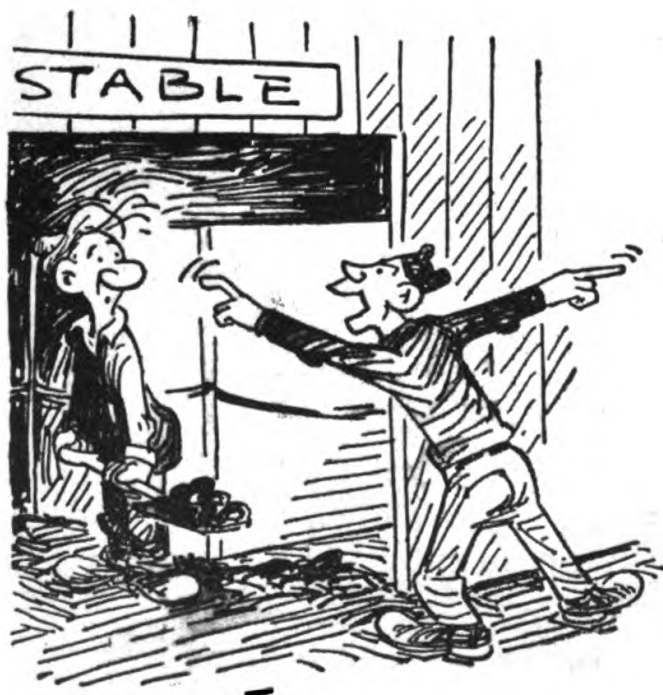
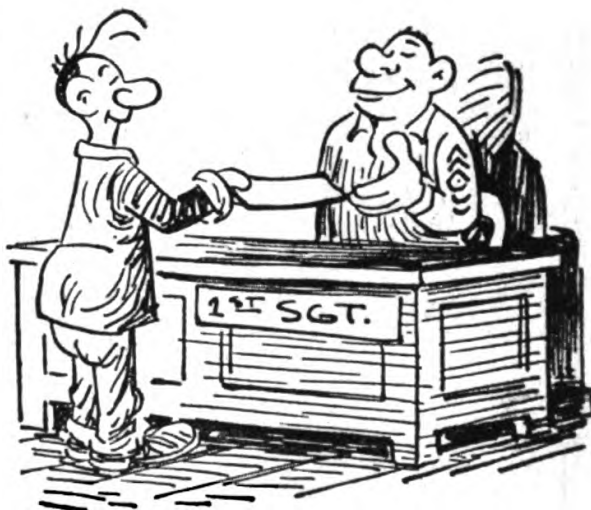
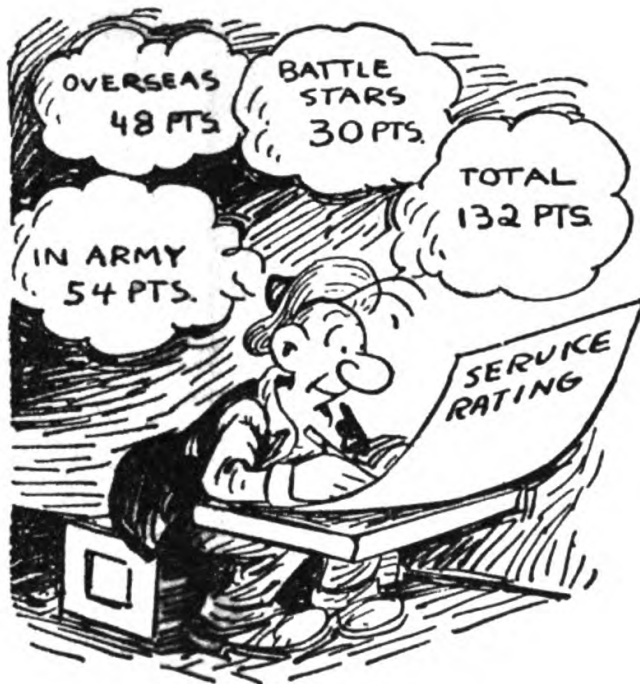
SGT. GEORGE BAKER

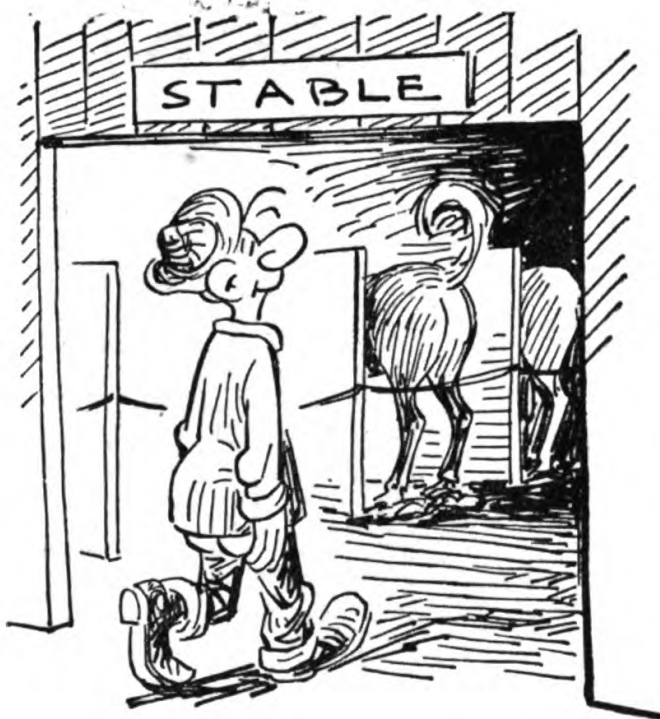
# PLANS





# POINT SYSTEM





## BULLETIN BOARD

### DISCHARGES

#### DISCHARGES APPROVED

SGT. McKIMSON  
SGT. PERRY  
SGT. FAIRBAIRNE  
SGT. WHITE  
SGT. COHEN  
SGT. COBEAN  
CPL. ADAMS  
PFC. BARRON

#### DISCHARGE DISAPPROVED BECAUSE OF ESSENTIAL ASSIGNMENT

PVT. SAD SACK

*by order of  
Capt. Streech*

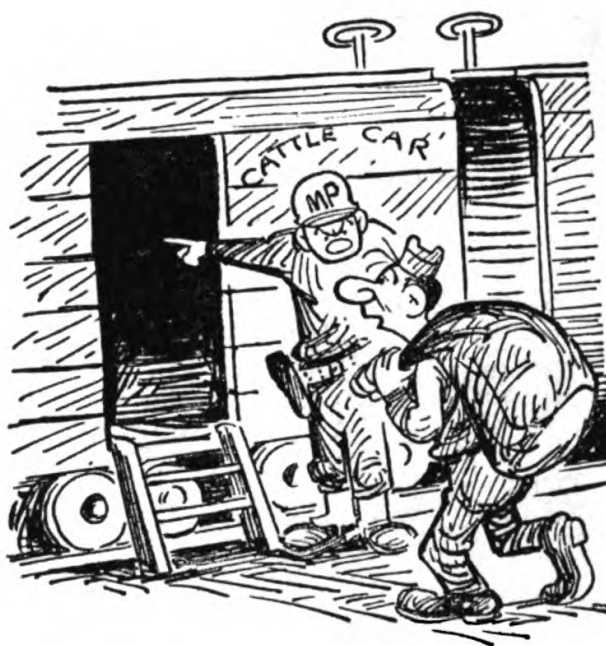
SGT. GEORGE BAKER





# HOME SWEET HOME





Sgt. GEORGE BAKER

# BACK TO EARTH





# JUNGLE CHORE







# FIRST CLASS ACCOMODATIONS





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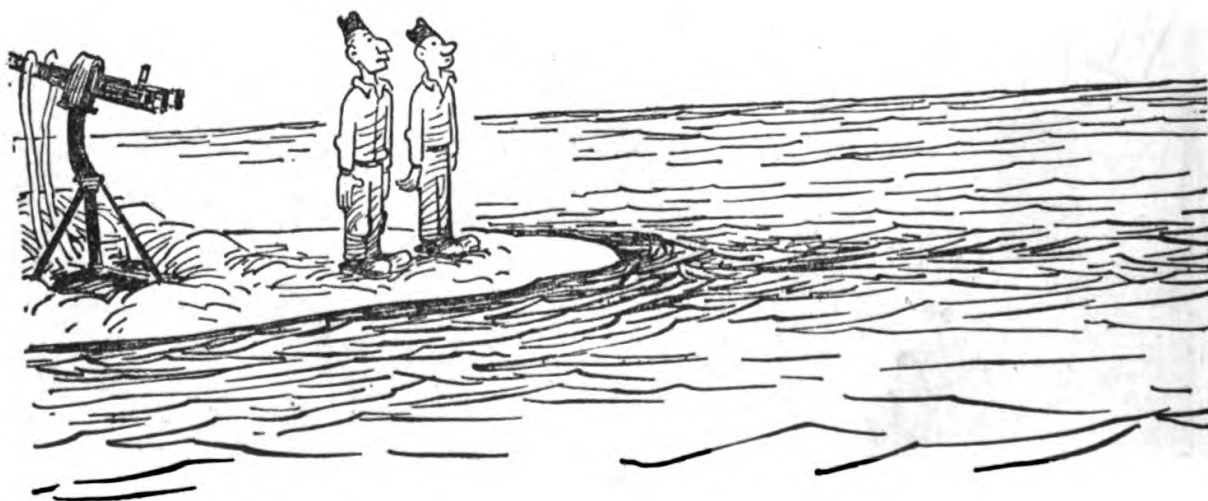
# STRICTLY PRIVATE







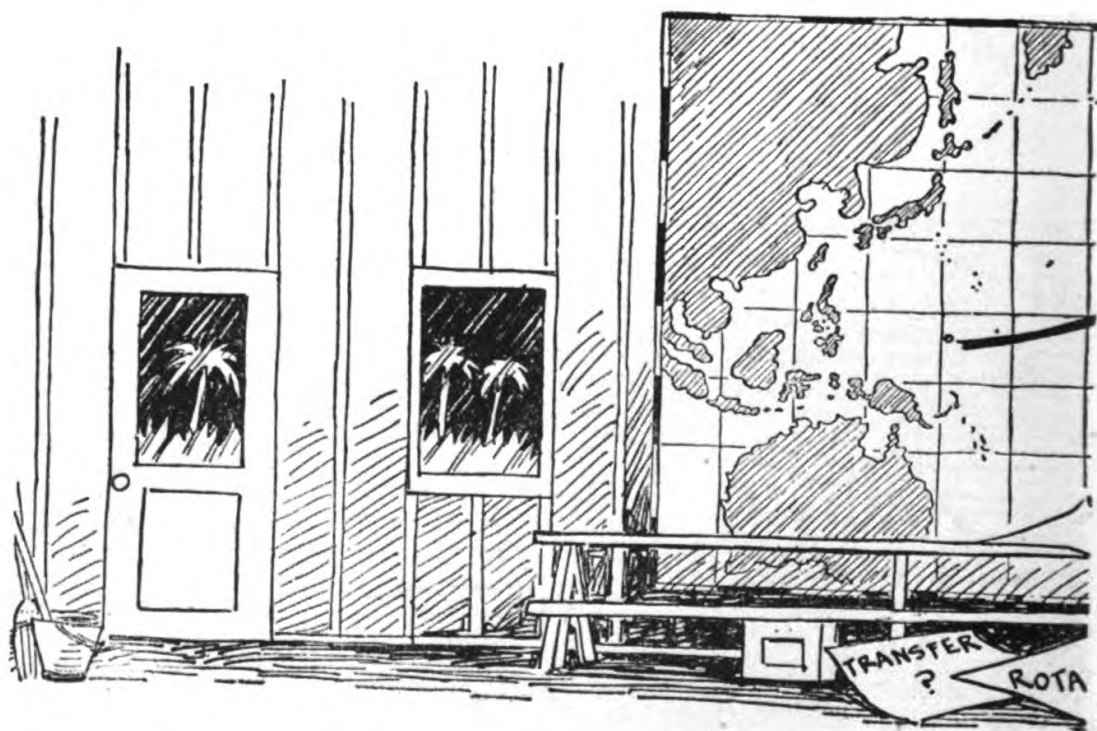
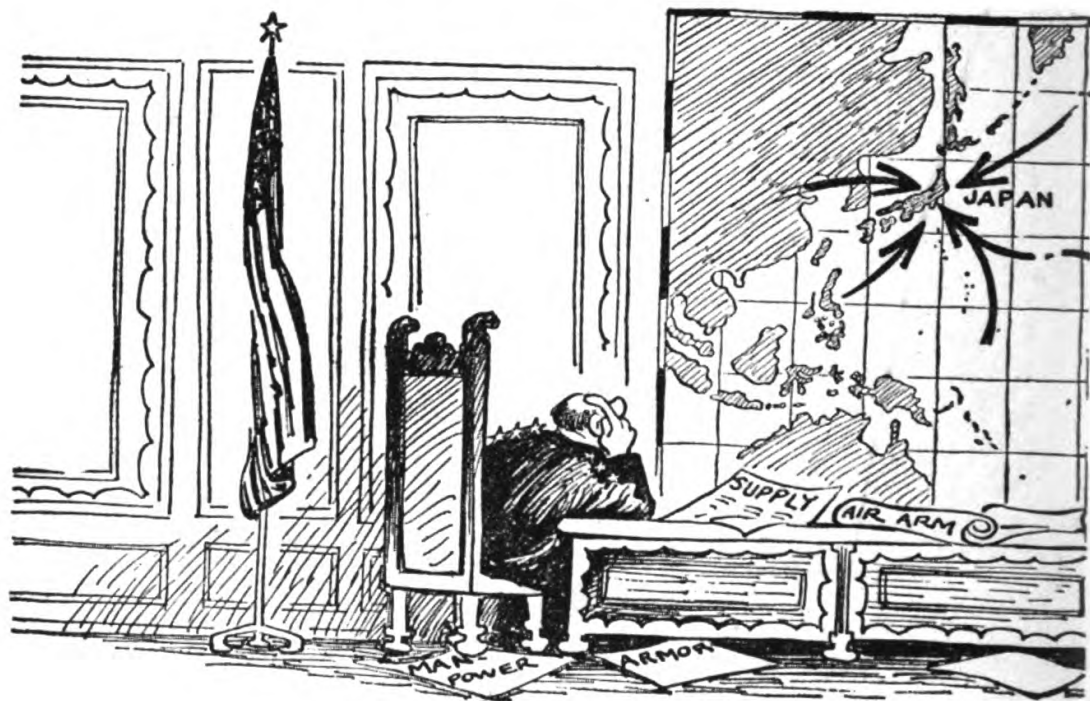
# THREE DAY PASS

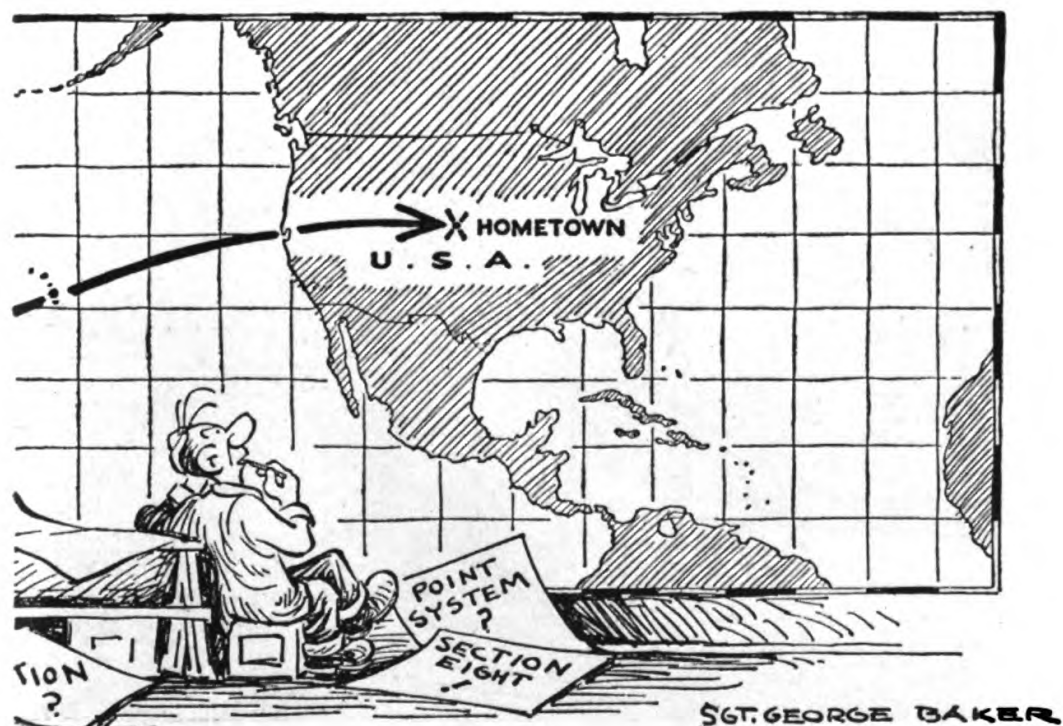
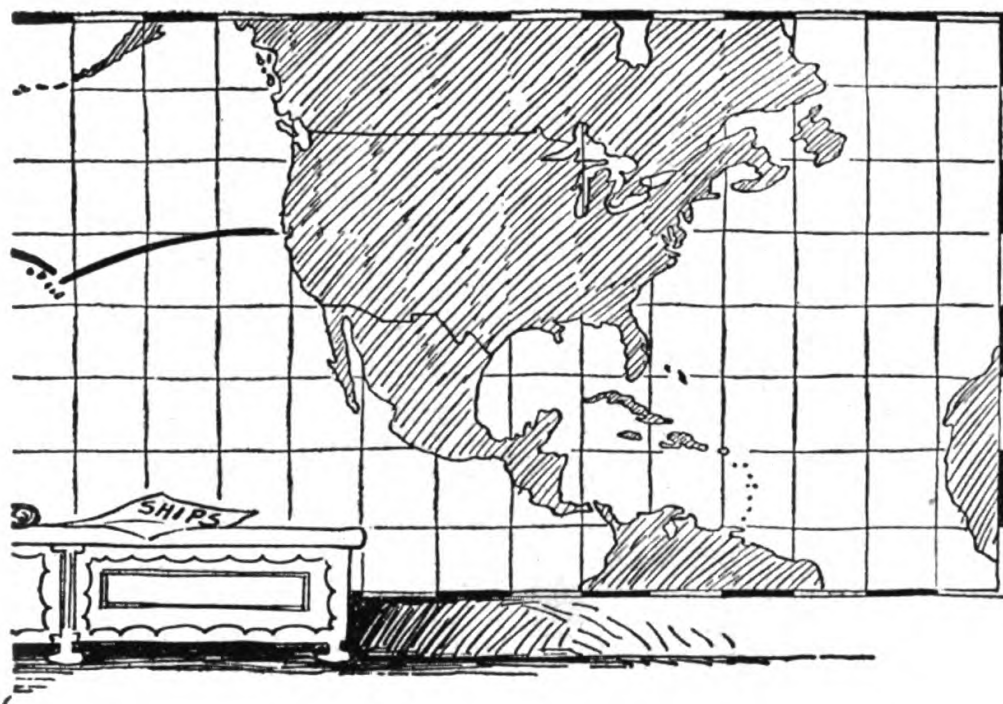




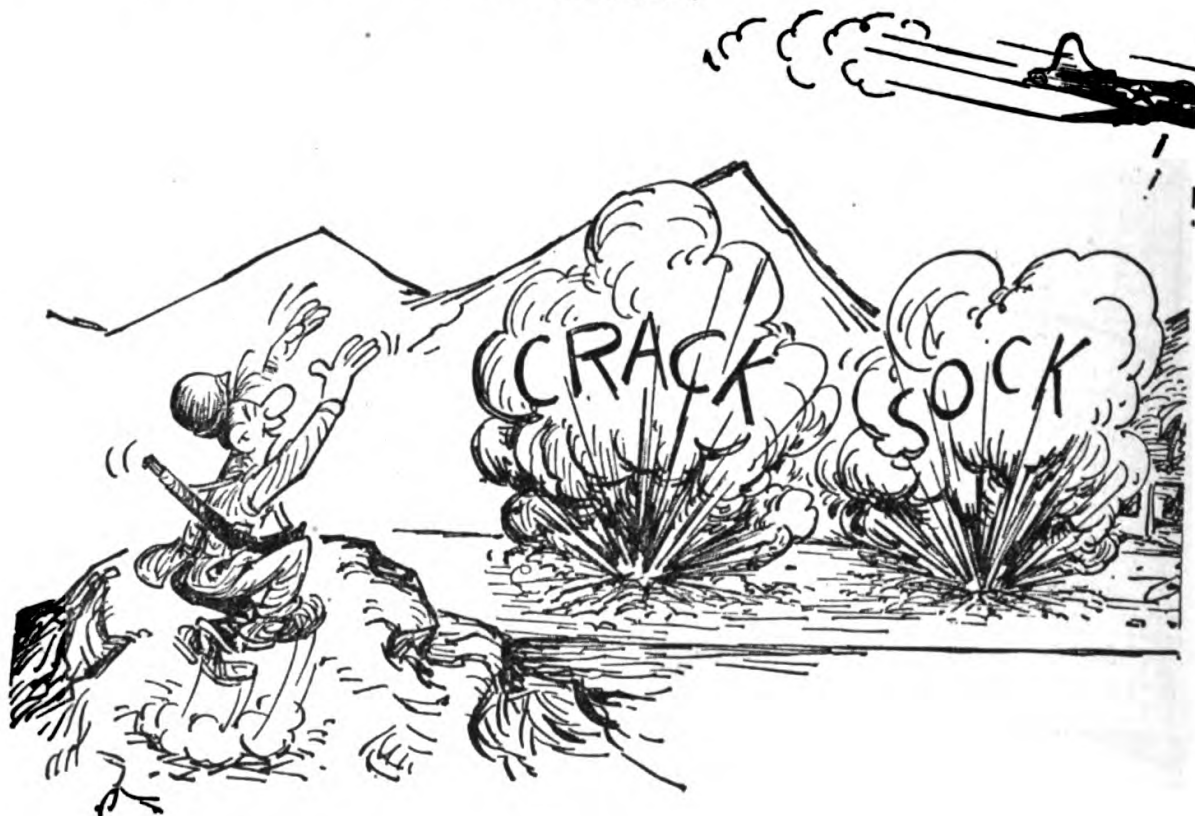
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# CONFLICTING CAMPAIGNS





# MOPPING UP OPERATION







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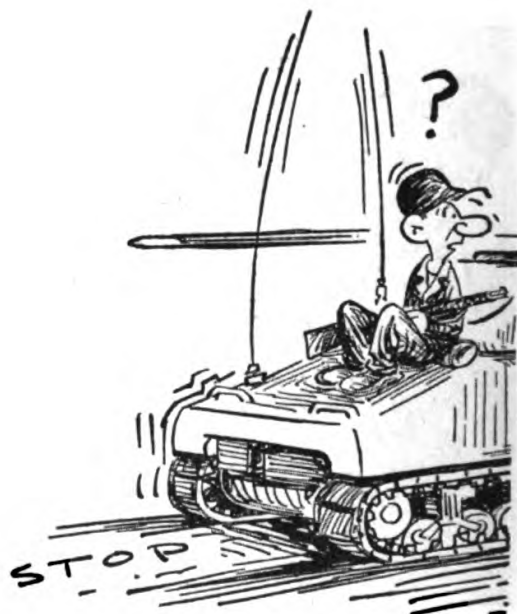
# PLAYMATE

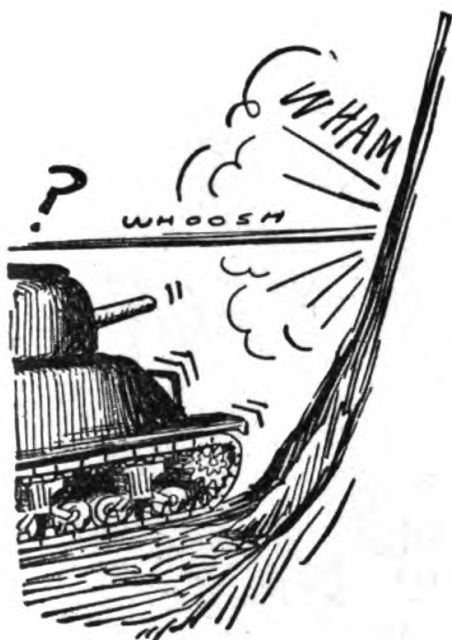




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# SIMPLE MATHEMATICS





\$60.



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# ALWAYS DISSATISFIED





# SIGHTSEERS



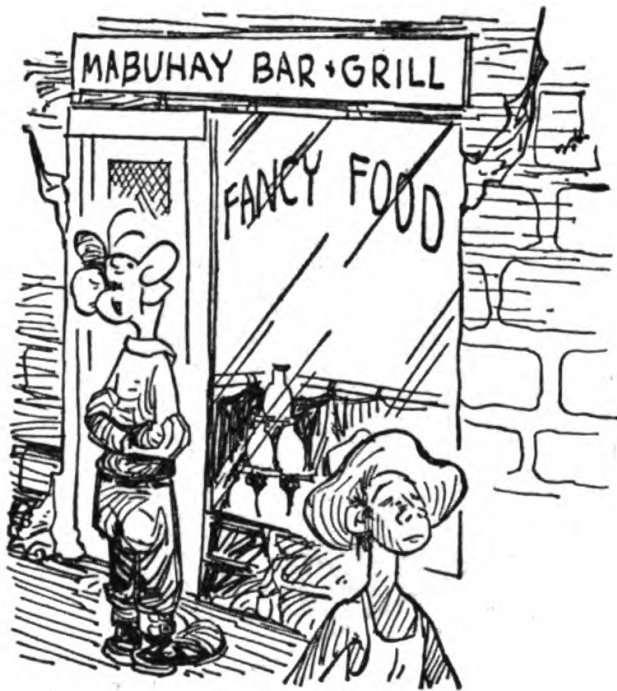




# DEFLATION







# TO THE VICTOR





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(PHILIPPINES)

# LUSH LIVING









# SAFETY IN NUMBERS





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PHILIPPINES

# HITCH BITCH

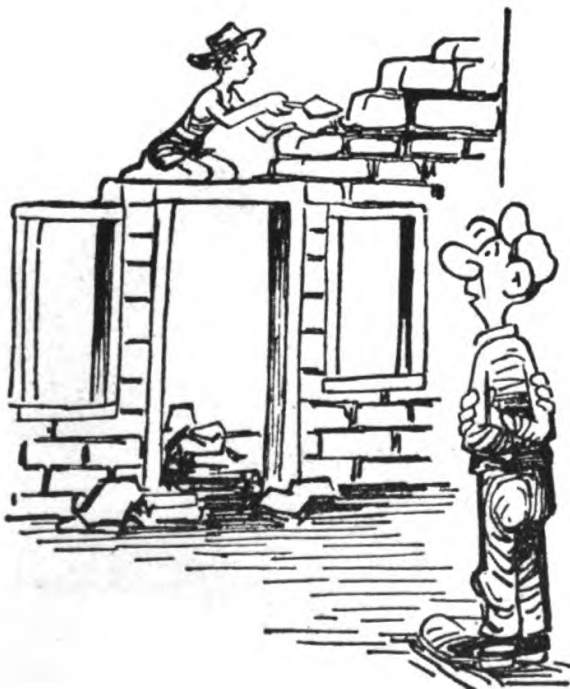




Sgt. GEORGE BAKER



# RECONSTRUCTION







Sgt. GEORGE BAKER  
PHILIPPINES

# FOOD FOR FEED



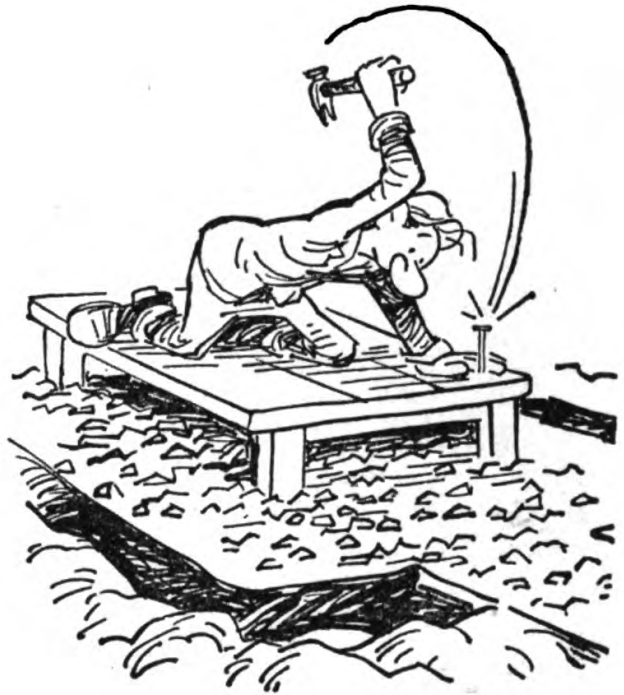


Sgt. GEORGE BAKER  
(PHILIPPINES)

# ROLLING STONE



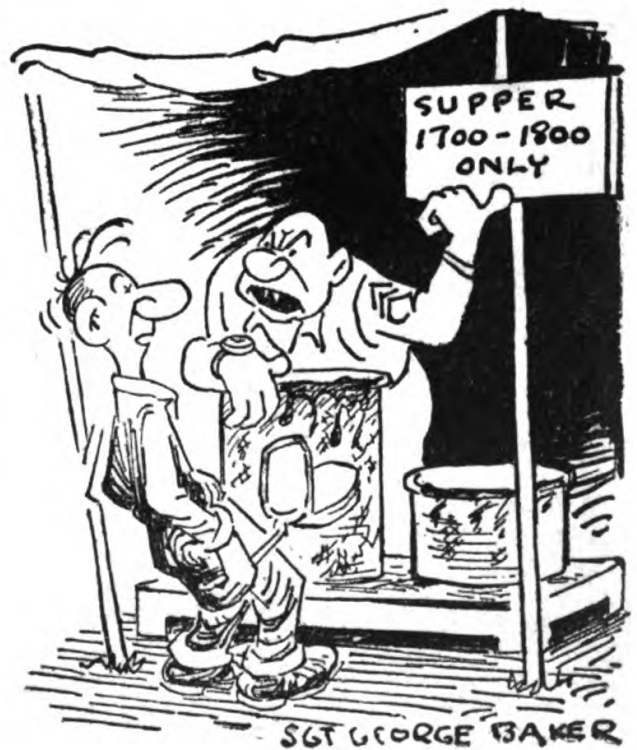




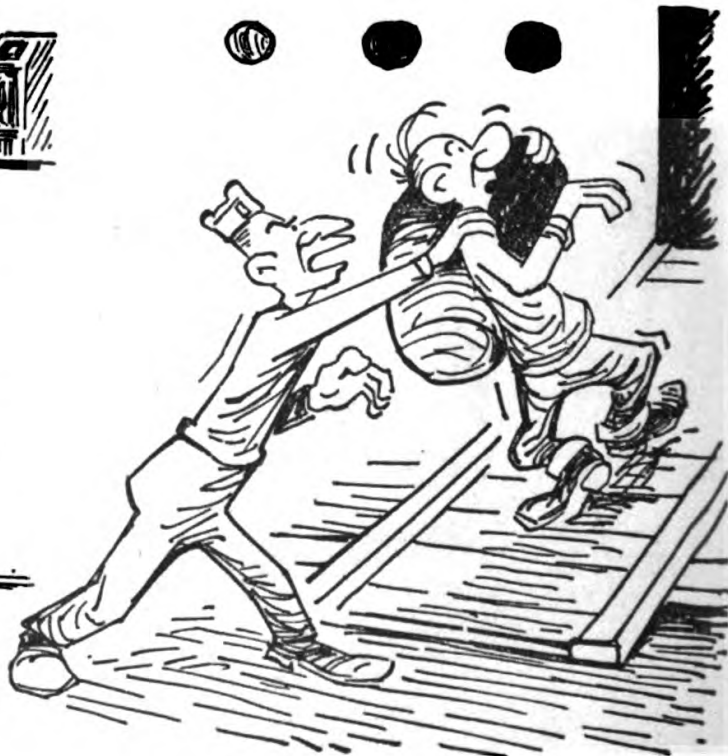
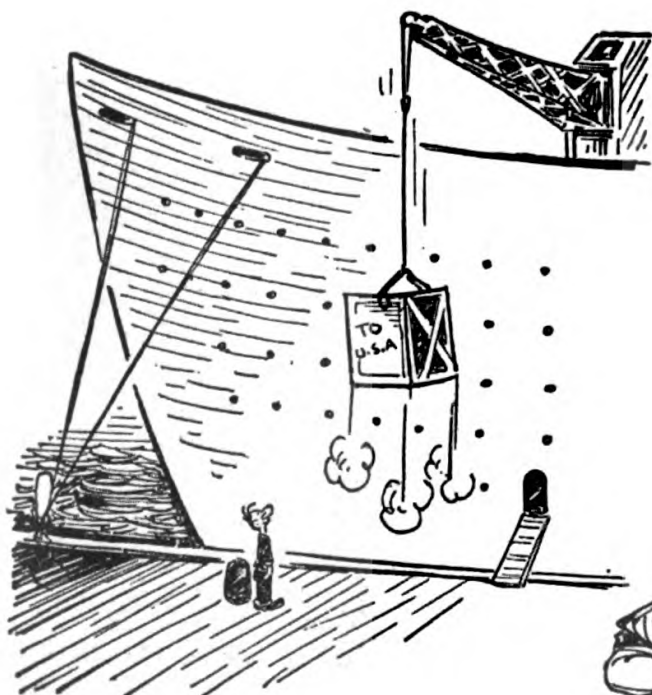
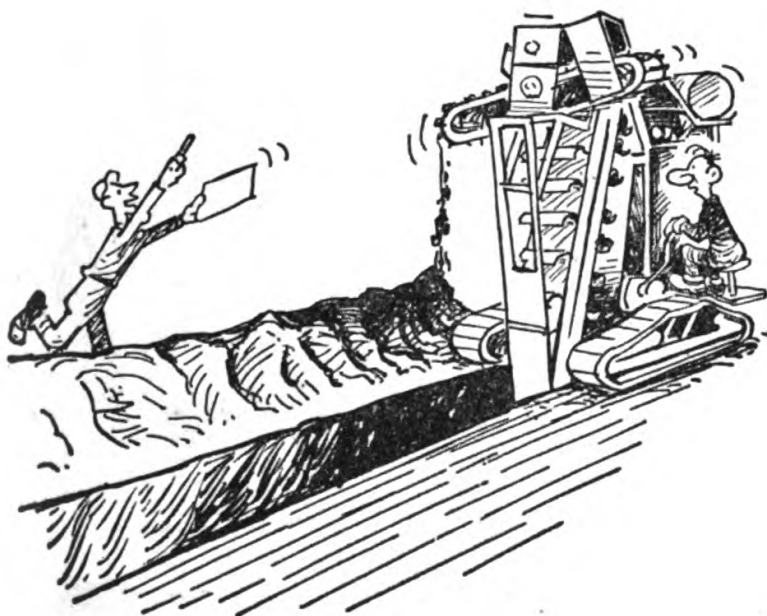


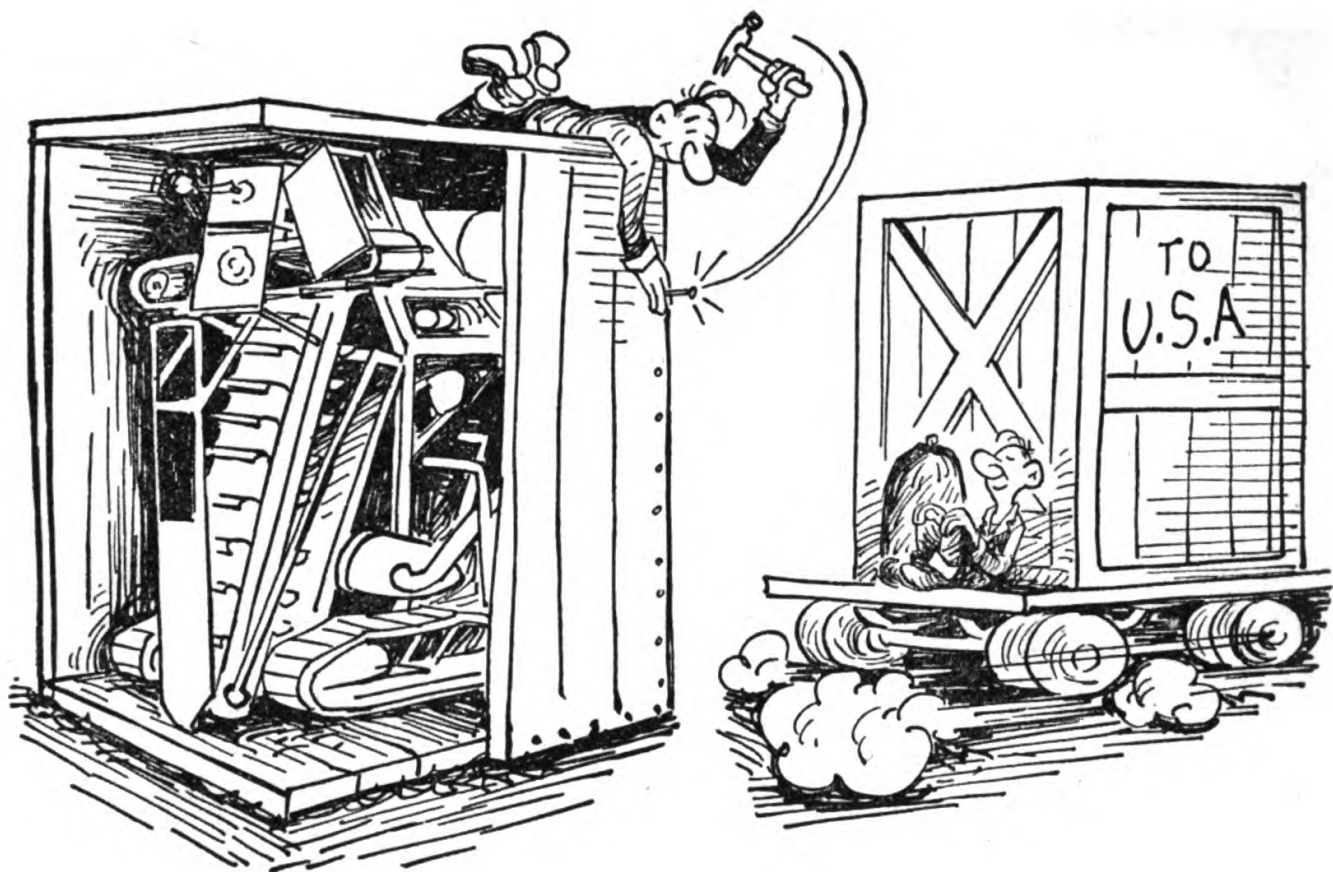
# OVERTIME





# DITCHED

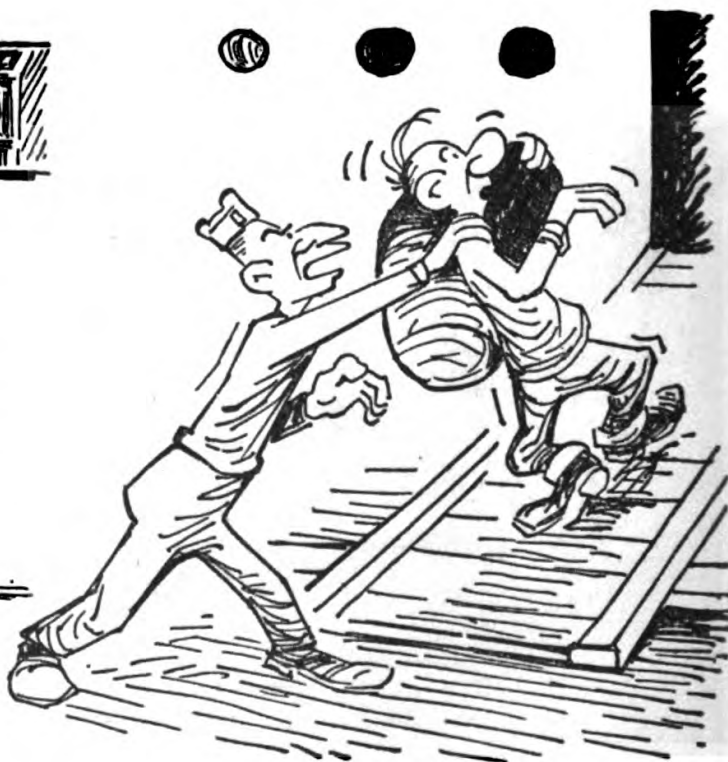
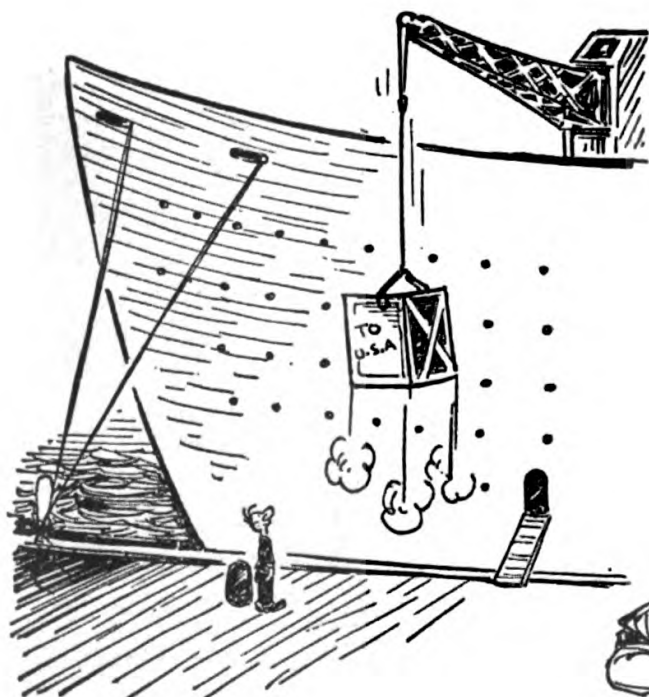
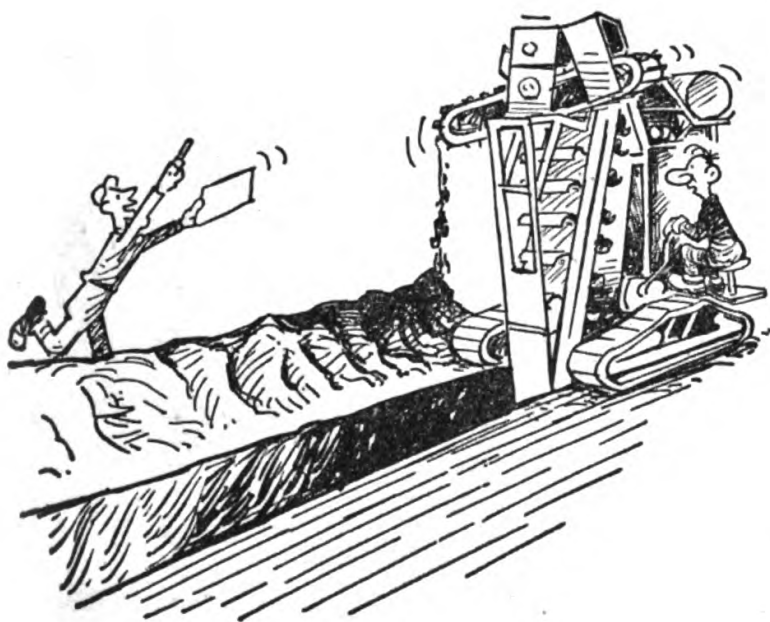




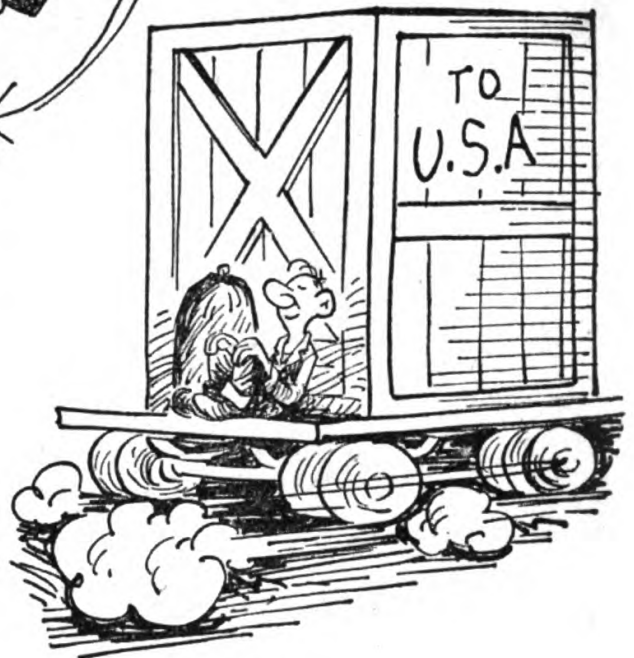
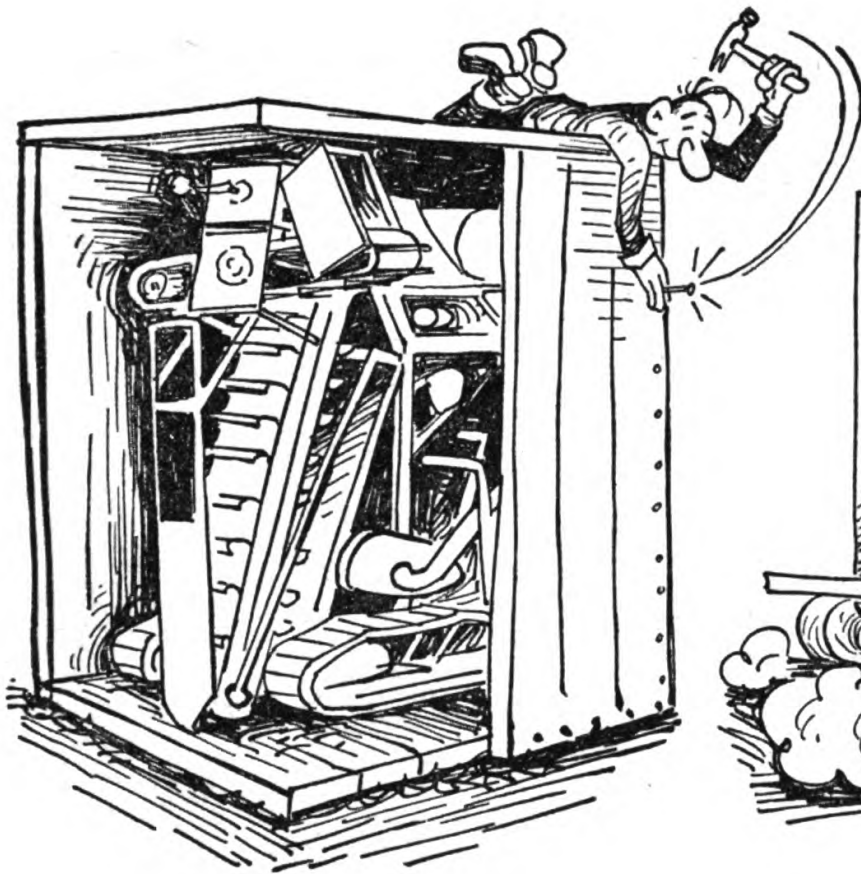
SGT. GEORGE BAKER  
OKINAWA



# DITCHED

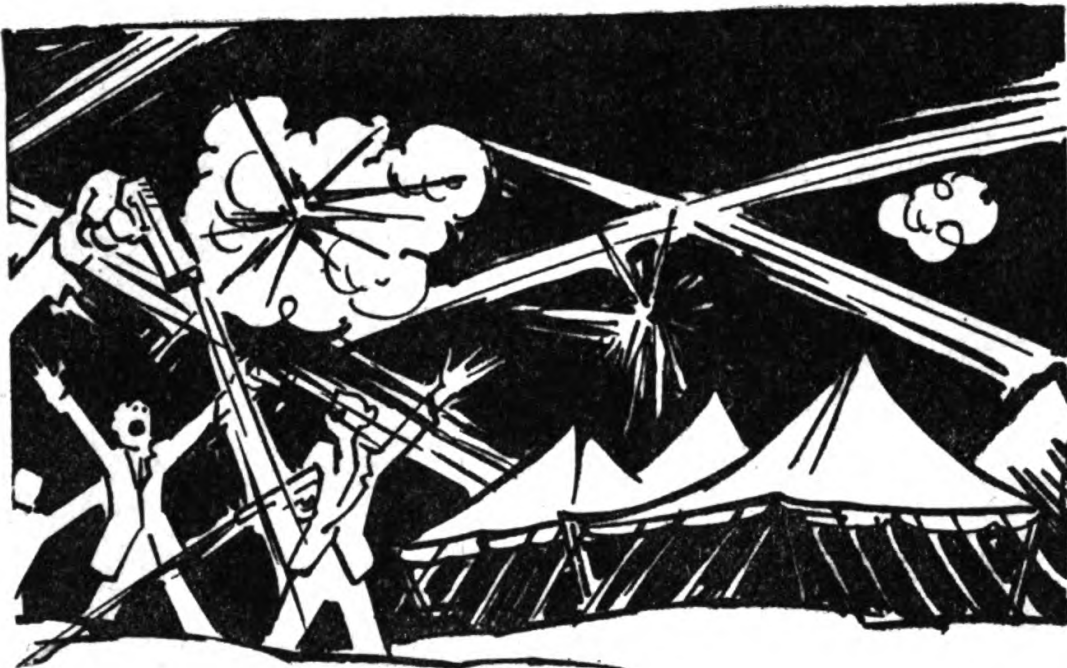






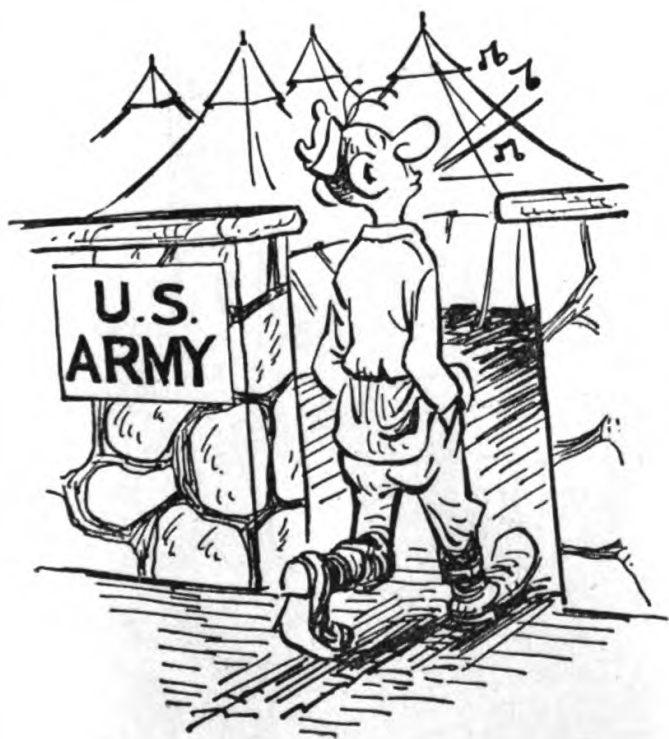
# PEACE AT LAST





# THE ENEMY







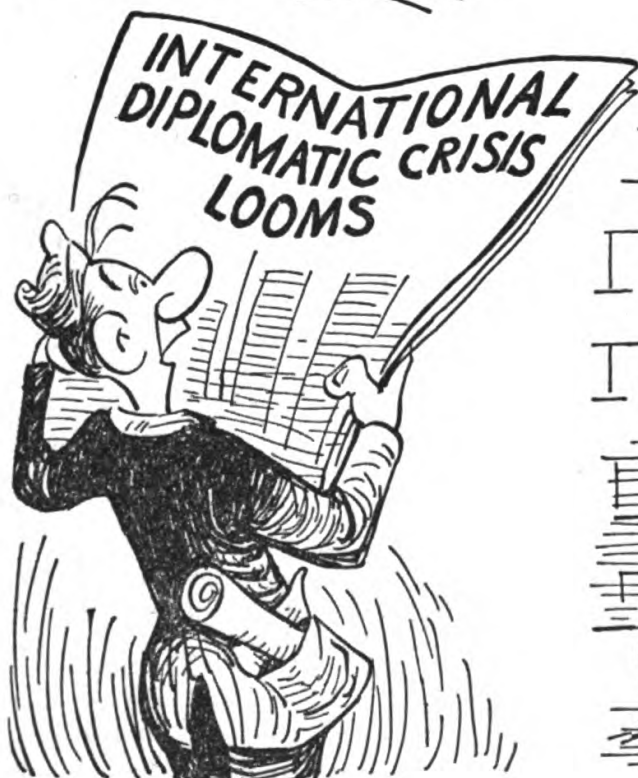
# ROOM RACKET





SET GEORGE BAKER

# HAPPY DAY





SGT. GEORGE BAKER





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Ex-Sergeant George Baker writes: "I was born May 22, 1915, in Lowell, Mass.*

*"Upon being graduated from high school, I did various jobs such as fitting the paper bags on newly pressed clothes in a cleaning and dyeing establishment, loading and driving trucks, and finally, working as an artist in a commercial art house. My artistic talents there were primarily employed in the drawing of pots and pans for newspaper advertisements.*

*"In 1937 I went out to Hollywood to work for Walt Disney. For the next four years I worked on virtually all of his well-known pictures which included Pinocchio, Fantasia, Dumbo and Bambi. From there I was inducted into the army in June of 1941.*

*"Most of my evenings in the army were spent drawing cartoons of army life using the Sad Sack as the bewildered civilian trying to be a soldier. Yank magazine, which was then forming, invited me to join their staff."*

*To keep the Sad Sack abreast of developments, Yank sent George Baker to dozens of army camps, to Panama, Africa and Italy, to the Philippines, Okinawa and Tokyo.*

*With his creator, the Sad Sack will be sharing the vicissitudes of civilian life from now on.*





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